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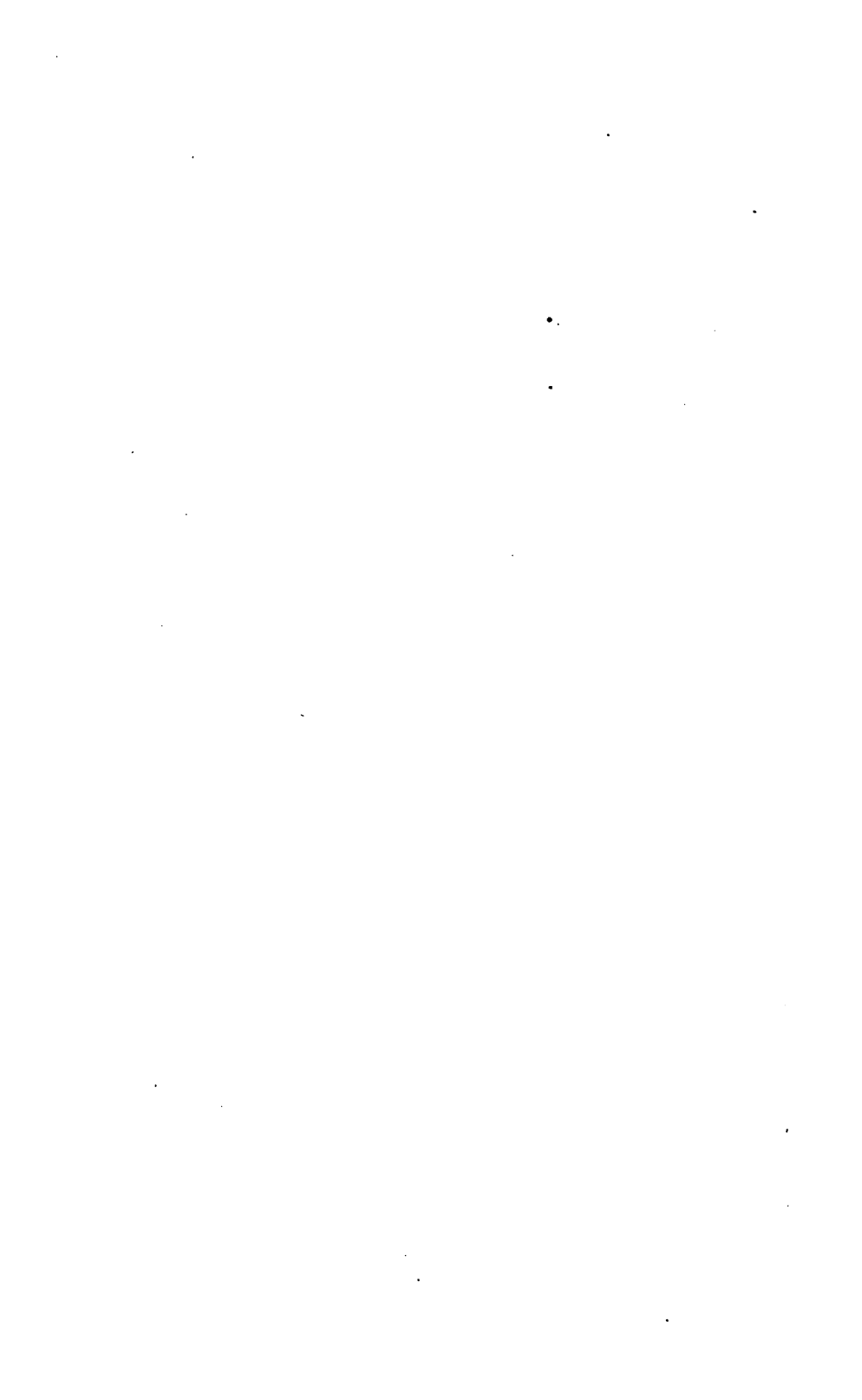
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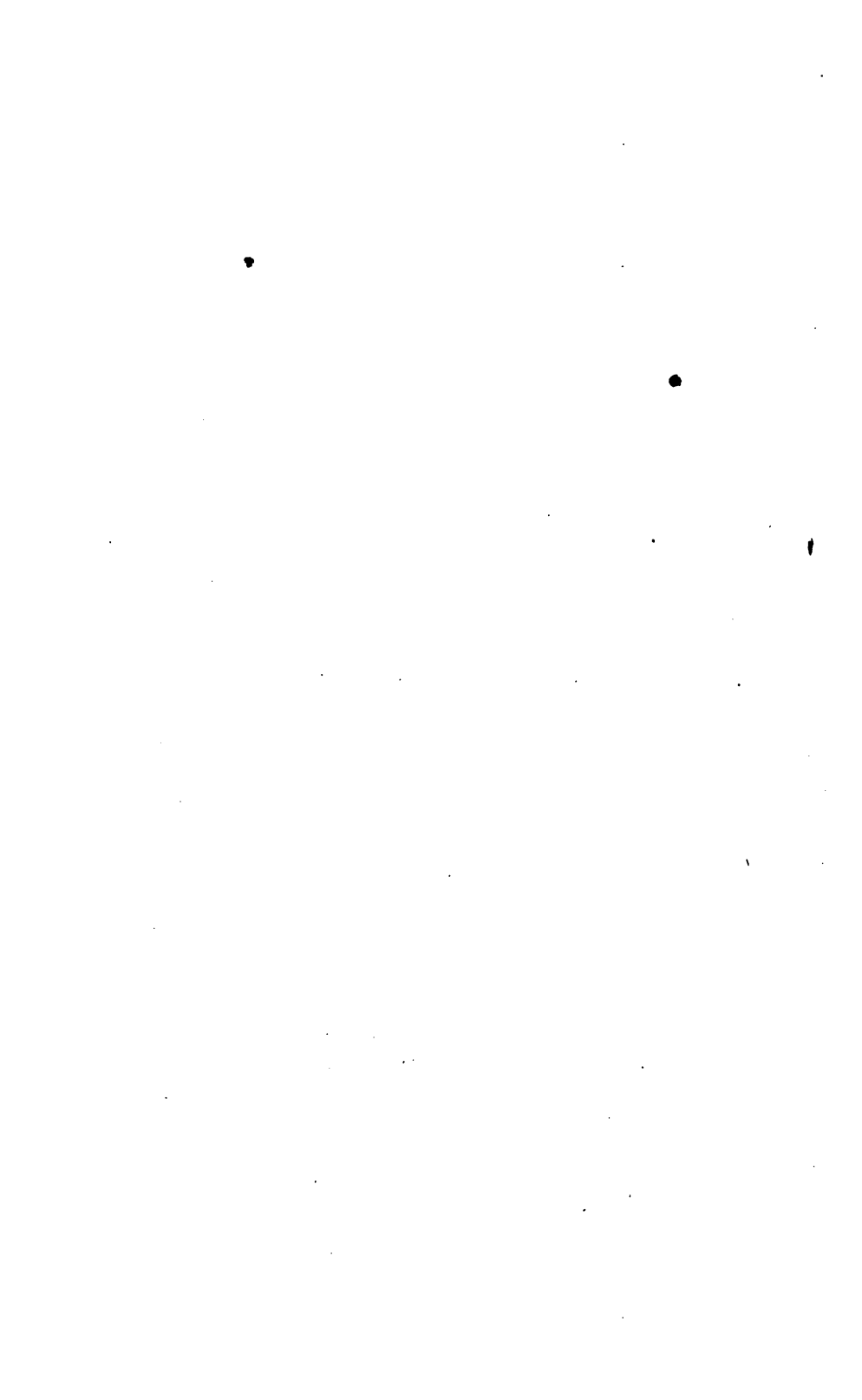




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ETERNAL LIFE.

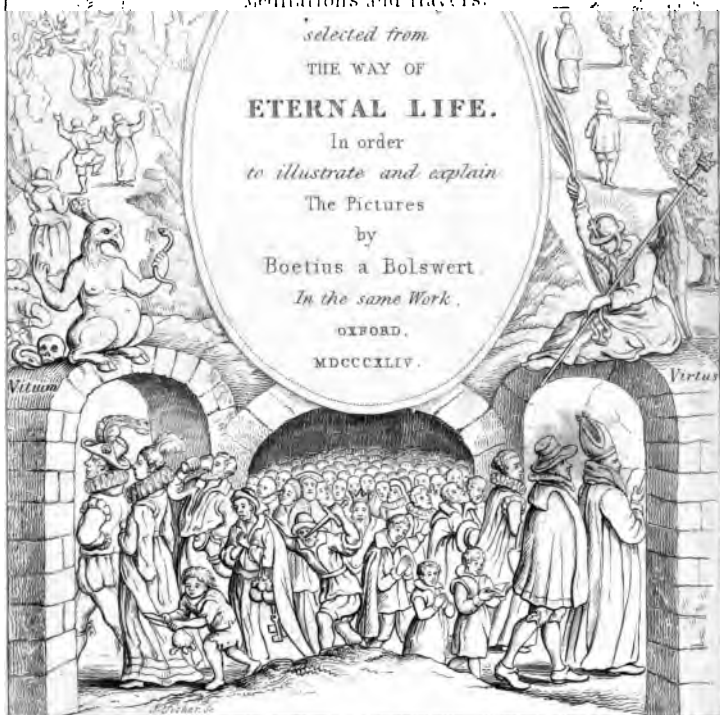
In order
to illustrate and explain
The Pictures

by
Boetius a Bolswert.

In the same Work,

OXFORD,

MDCCCLIV.



Published by J. H. Parker, Oxford

SOME MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

SELECTED FROM

The Way of Eternal Life,

IN ORDER TO ILLUSTRATE AND EXPLAIN THE PICTURES

By BOETIUS A BOLSWERT

FOR THE SAME WORK.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN,
AND ADAPTED TO THE USE OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH,

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A Prayer,

WHEREIN THE READER PRAYS FOR GRACE THAT HE MAY PROFITABLY
READ, AND PRACTISE WHAT HE READS.

Thou hast said, O Lord Jesu, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me, draw him :" and *"every one who hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Me."* Draw me therefore unto Thee, I pray Thee, O my God ; teach me, while I read, Thy righteous ways. Whosoever he may be that now speaketh unto me, let him so speak and let me so receive his words, as of one that bringeth oracles from Thee^a. I deeply mourn, O Holy Spirit, that I have not loved Thee as Thou hast loved me ; come then Thyself and speak Thou to me, "for Thy servant heareth :"^a if he be deaf, make him to hear ; if dumb, to speak of Thy greatness, and to draw others unto Thee ; that the learning of these things may not be to my condemnation, if I neglect to perform them while I can. For I know that it is by no blind chance, but of Thine infinite love, and kind Providence, that this is now come to me, as it were a message from Thee. Turn it, I pray Thee, to Thy servant's good. And as I am invited by Thy grace to follow Thee to-day, and am willing to do so, do not Thou fail me, O Thou my Salvation and Hope for ever.

^a 1 Pet. iv. 11.

IMAGE THE FIRST.

CONSIDER, O MAN, THINE END AND THY WAYS.

Consider (A) as in the presence of God, for what end thou art created, (B) as if an Heavenly guide stood by thy side as thou art formed from the dust, and pointed out to thee thine everlasting home. Consider that the end is twofold, the one is that of happiness (C), the other of misery (D). And into this latter the World is being rolled down (E). It departeth into smoke, and is inflamed with a threefold concupiscence. And observe how it is ever tossed about as the Sea (F), which causeth shipwrecks, and is full of shoals and rocks. Into that celestial Glory there is a threefold way that leadeth (G), by which is signified the threefold state of life; the life of religious retirement which is denoted by the direct way; that of the Clergy by one which is less direct; and the life spent amid worldly occupations by that which is winding and intricate. Such forsooth it is, as being of itself less adapted to the attainment of Christian perfection; although it full often happens that they who are in this latter state, do in piety far surpass those who live in the more perfect, rising up by the steps that lead into the straighter way. There is moreover another circumstance which is designated by the threefold path; the way of purification, which is that of beginners; the way of illumination, which is that of the more advanced; and that of union with God, which is the way of the perfect. Thou art moreover admonished that in every state, in every step, and in every action, there is a mode of life and practice which is threefold, Take care that in all things thou adherest to that course of conduct which is most simple and direct. Always in all things keep God before thine eyes (H). And in every place draw near unto God in prayer, in one of these threefold characters (I), either as a criminal groaning over thine offences, or as one poor and in need of all virtue, or as the Bride burning with love. For these three persons serve to express the threefold spiritual condition. And thus approaching say, "Let my complaint come before Thee, O Lord, give me understanding according to Thy word^b."

^b Psalm cxix. 169.





On the End of Man.

CONSIDERATION ON THE END OF MAN, AND ASSISTANCES TOWARDS
PRAYING ABRIGHT.

As the sailor before all things determines on the haven to which he would sail, and the traveller on the end to which he would go; Consideration of our end necessary. so nothing is more necessary, in this our journey of mortality, than constantly to consider the termination of this our voyage and travel, that end for which we were born; in order that all other things which are to be done in this life may be directed towards that end. For otherwise we oftentimes either depart from that way and end, or at all events walk along circuitous paths, and entangle ourselves in ways full of difficulty and toil. O my God, how great is this wandering in all the life of man! where is the man who, since he first comes to the use of reason, is earnestly engaged in pressing forward from banishment and the place of exile to his home, and in directing thither all his thoughts and pursuits, his words and actions? Each one for the most part sets to himself some ends, the most vain, of honour or of pleasure; and Various ends. they know not, alas! wretched men, whither they direct, or ought to direct, their course: and when they are invited to receive on a stated day great honours in the heavenly Jerusalem, wandering about and trifling, they go far from Jerusalem to Jericho, from the city of the everlasting hills to that which is situate below. Certainly no Our end is God and Heaven. subject is a greater occasion for sorrow, none more worthy of tears than this, that man created for an end so great, yet should live so unmindful of himself and of God, that the least of his cares and anxieties should be for the attainment of that end for which he was born. Be not thou, therefore, carried away by that common error of the multitude, whosoever thou art who readeest this book: I entreat thee that thou wouldst consider thine end, that thou wouldst turn thine eyes first of all to the earth, from which thou hast thine origin; and then lift them up to Heaven, to that kingdom for the possession of which thou wast made of God and created; lift up thine eyes, I say, full of tears to God, as a stranger and a sojourner in a desert land, a place of dismal, and dread, and vast solitude.

Beyond all things, in all thy Considerations, and Prayers, and Meditations, remember that God is most intimately present with thee; take heed, therefore, that thou speak not to Him without seriousness, but compose thy thoughts with reverence and devotion, as knowing that He is not far from thee.

Preparatory Prayer.

O most mighty God, before Whom all things are as though they were not, now at least, I beseech Thee, let this the prayer of Thine exiled and prodigal son be directed to Thee, and let his whole labour be as incense in Thy sight to the glory of Thy great Name. For Thou hast created heaven and earth for me, and in long-suffering dost preserve them, when otherwise they would perish, that at length, O my Maker and only Good, I may know and love Thee. And how could it be that I loved Thee not, when Thou hast loved me from all eternity? Hast not Thou, O most loving Father, heaped innumerable benefits on me Thy prodigal son, and I on Thee, alas! have heaped but injuries? Thou hast given Thyself and Thy Son unto me, that He might redeem me in His own blood. O King of kings, and Lord of lords, Who art everywhere present, and considerest in every place the evil and the good, and tryest the heart and the reins; behold, with living faith, and great confidence, (for Thou hast said, Whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be done to you) I draw near to the throne of Thy glory; I come as a criminal to his Judge, as a poor and prodigal son to his Father, and with all the love I can to Thee Whom my soul loveth; that I may be pleasing to Thee alone, and may amend my life, especially this sin of ———; that I may offer to Thee the sacrifice of praise with my whole heart, and with all affection due to Thee from every creature, which hath been, or is, or shall, or can be, even if Thou of Thy mighty power shouldst create numberless worlds; as united unto Thee in the love and merits of Christ Jesus. O most Holy Trinity, I do long to praise Thee, in the stead of all who know Thee not and blaspheme Thee, whether they be in earth or in hell. I bless Thee, therefore, together with Thy saints, and I give Thee thanks for all Thy gifts to our human nature in Christ Jesus, to all saints and to me, and most chiefly for Thy love towards me Thy servant. I restore myself again to Thee as to the Fount of all, and commit myself wholly to Thee, that Thou mayst dispose of me in time and in eternity; my soul and all its powers I dedicate unto Thee, O most Holy Trinity, that by them, with Thy Church and every creature of Thine, with my whole heart I may praise

Thee. Grant me grace, I pray Thee, humbly, attentively, fervently to do this, bound as I am by so many benefits to Thee my God. For without Thee, what am I? what can I do? or what can I desire out of Thee? I have nothing in Heaven but Thee, and beside Thee there is nothing upon earth that I desire; but in Thee I am and live and die. And never, oh never may I for one moment go back from Thee, nor be Thou ever removed afar from me!

Meditation.

ON THE END FOR WHICH MAN WAS CREATED.

PREPARATION I. IMAGINE thyself sitting as in a vast desert, and beholding all men from the foundation of the world, as seen in the frontispiece of this book, coming forth upon the stage of this life, from the womb of the great mother of all, and passing on through the gate of death, as through a slight veil or curtain, into the most opposite kingdoms, into a most happy, or most miserable eternity. Behold God and His Saints exhorting thee to learn caution by the danger of others.

II. DEVOUTLY ask of God that He would vouchsafe to shew the way wherein thou shouldst walk, and to grant thee that, from beholding the unhappy end of so many miserable men, thou mayest thyself be able to obtain a happier life and termination.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER the abyss of nothingness which existed before the world was made, where and what this scene of things then was, the earth, kings, and princes, all men, and whatsoever is contained within the compass of this world, and where will these things, where wilt thou thyself be, after a short time, for all eternity? Pause and consider. The fashion of this world passeth away, all things are departing as doth a shadow! Do thou then attentively observe the vanity of all things, as thou plainly seest it in that abyss of nothingness;—that thou thyself and all things else were once nothing; that thou couldest not have been, and when brought into being couldest not have done any thing, nor known any thing, if thou hadst not received it from thy Creator; and then humble thyself under His mighty hand, nor ever glory in aught but Him. For who maketh thee to differ from another? What hast thou which thou didst not receive? but if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as though *thou hadst not received it?*

Consider, secondly, thyself, as having recently come forth by the Divine hand out of that chaos, or nothing, and as having by the same hand been placed in the spacious theatre of the universe, and as it were in a desert of infinite vastness. Regard thyself such as God formed thee out of the dust of the earth, how He breathed into thee the breath of life, and fashioned thee after His own Image, when He gave thee a soul intellectual, spiritual, and in all respects entire, moving all things, immortal, one, but furnished with threefold powers;—a body also endowed with senses, and in all points complete. And then, O man, acknowledge thine own dignity, acknowledge the dignity of the human state. Thou hast indeed a body, like the world in which thou art; for so doth it become him who is set over the corporeal frame of this creation, to be in some degree like unto it; but thou hast also somewhat far higher, nor art thou to be compared in any wise with the other creatures.

Consider, thirdly, God in Christ as present with thee, just as He was with Adam when newly created, and humbly ask of Him, for what purpose He created thee; and hear Him saying, that He made all things for Himself, and for His own glory, and hath made thee that thou mightest in this life praise Him, and serve Him, as every creature doth, and at length obtain perpetual felicity in Heaven; and wilt thou dare, thou His creature, that which His hands have fashioned, His workmanship, His slave, and His son, to despise Him and to live to His dishonour? Behold Him pointing out Heaven to thee, in which thou art enrolled a citizen, if thou hast but the will so to be. Look down before thee upon the pit of hell, wherein, if thou be otherwise minded, thou wilt become liable to everlasting torments. And see, I pray thee, O Christian soul, how overwhelming a necessity is imposed on thee of leading a holy life, placed as thou art in the midst between eternal punishments and eternal rewards.

SECOND POINT.

FIRST, imagine thyself dwelling in that vast desert of this world, and see how high is thy home, how steep the ascent thereto! Then, not without reason, mayst thou sigh, and think what path thou must keep, seeing that all eternity is at stake. O, with what anxiety, with what ceaseless care and watchfulness, oughtest thou to dwell on this consideration! To this all created beings seem to urge thee, tending as they do by one vast steady impulse each to its own final end and purpose. Behold! how do the elements hasten each to its natural place—how are animals borne forwards toward their peculiar *delights* and the proper end of their being! Mark how the children of

the world turn all the thoughts and powers of their soul in one direction, to the attainment of their vain end, whether of honour or pleasure! But come now, consider; how often dost thou reflect on thine own end? on the way and path which leadeth thereto?

In the next place, consider how noble is the end assigned thee, namely, to serve God; how profitable for thee to cleave fast unto Him, to be one spirit with Him, and so to enjoy eternal felicity! Surely Nobleness of the end. nothing else but this only can be profitable to thee; thy one, sole good here below is to tend towards that true end of thy creation; and the nearer thou drawest unto it the more blessed is thy state. For that which constitutes the perfection and happiness of every thing, is its proper end and aim. God forbid, then, that thou shouldst seek any other good; rather seek that which is indeed thine own, O thou Christian soul! For one thing is good to one object, another thing to another: seek thou thine own good; none is good save the Most High God. What then can be wanting to thee who hast the Chief Good? There are also inferior goods, which are good some to one, some to another. Ask of the beasts of the earth, what is their good; they will tell thee, it is to eat and fill their bellies, and to drink, and to be free from want, to sleep, to enjoy themselves, to live and be healthy, to beget their like: is it such a good as that which thou seekest? Thou who art joint-heir with Christ, how canst thou rejoice at being companion with the beasts! rather lift up thy hopes to the Good of all goods.

Consider, in the third place, what supports for thy journey have been granted thee by God, namely, all the creatures which in great abundance thy Creator hath bestowed upon thee out of His Means to that end. infinite bounty, both for use and for delight. O the wonderful goodness of God in the numberless arts and sciences! But far more illustrious are His spiritual gifts, especially the blessed Sacraments (those true and real means of grace), these gifts also are numberless. And thus then what are all these but paths and aids towards the way of eternity, infinite as well in bliss as in duration? Wherefore render thou unbounded thanks to so munificent a Giver.

But ever remember that (unless thou art the most senseless of all beings) thou mayst not use any of these gifts, nor love them, nor seek them, except so far as they can aid thee in attaining How to use the means. thine end, that is, all that is good for thee; and that it is thy duty to choose out the best means, the safest way to that end. For supposing thou hadst to go to thy home, wouldst thou choose any path but the best? If thy health required attention, wouldst thou apply other than the safest remedy? If thou wert to make a voyage by sea, wouldst thou prefer a rotten and crazy vessel to one that was sound and strong?

Whether it were garment, or horse, or chariot, or house, thou wouldst make choice of the best that was offered thee; when thou hast to choose the path on which eternity depends, wilt thou be so desperately foolish as to prefer the more dangerous one? O that men would be wise, that they would understand this, and consider their latter end! Here call to mind what inclinations thou perceivest in thyself towards worldly distinctions, riches, pleasures, and the like; and see that the fondness for such things does not drag thee away into a risk of losing that life and way which is eternal.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER as in God's sight that thou art ignorant of the way which will bring thee to salvation. Wherefore Jeremiah spake thus to the Lord, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The Wise man also saith, "A man's ways are from the Lord." What man therefore can understand his own way? And alas! how many are the ways which seem right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death! See and observe how uncertain is all human foresight! O how often is it the case that

Our ways
uncertain.

we make choice of our state of life or occupation, that we set sail (as it were) with a prosperous breeze, then a storm ariseth and we are driven on the quicksands of various miseries, or into that whirlpool, the eternal loss of salvation; only because we would not choose the right pathway. Think, therefore, as often as any office, or state of life, or important business, is to be undertaken by thee, as if thou wert sick, and many medicines were offered thee, and a great variety of drugs, one or two of which are deadly poison; in such a case wouldst thou make a rash and hasty choice? Suppose lots presented unto thee, among which more than one would bring upon thee eternal death, couldst thou be so rash as to dare to draw them? Finally, imagine thyself standing in the midst of a vast desert, on a spot where many paths meet, and full of dangers, how wretched and helpless wouldst thou feel thyself, with darkness around thee and ignorant of the ways? I ask,

God to be
entreated to
shew us the
way.

wouldst thou knowingly choose the worse path? or rather, wouldst thou venture to choose any path, rejecting a guide who might then shew himself and offer to direct thee? Couldst thou venture to turn thy steps in any one direction, when thou wert equally ignorant of all? Being blind, couldst thou choose out a path for thyself? Wouldst thou not rather with all earnestness seek for a guide, and humbly entreat him to lead thee as he shall think best? In all these things then be thou indifferent, that is, as one neither inclined to one part nor to the other; but humbly beg of God that He would direct

thy paths, and say with the Prophet David, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord; and lead me in the right way, because of mine enemies."

The Prayer.

Almighty, everlasting God, Who hast created all these things out of nothing by Thy powerful hand, and hast formed me in Thine own image and likeness; grant, I beseech Thee, that I may never be forgetful of Thee. Rather let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and let my right hand forget her cunning, than that I, made by Thee, and for this one end alone that I might praise and love Thee, should at any time be forgetful of Thee; that my heart should be so lifted up as that I should be forgetful of my origin. O my only hope, my God, suffer not, I beseech Thee, the foot of pride to come against me, where they are all fallen who work wickedness.

The end of
Creation.

But how can the heart of man be lifted up, who is made out of nothing, and any moment is liable to return into nothing; unless Thou sustainest him with Thine hand; unless Thou of Thine infinite goodness and beneficence preserve the elements, and all other things necessary for life? What requital shall I make unto Thee, O my God, for all these things which Thou hast bestowed upon me? For from everlasting, before the foundation of the world, Thou hast loved me. Where then was I who was nothing? In Thee I was, and yet I was not: for that which has been made in Thee was life, and I was known to Thee, while as yet unknown to myself: because at some time in Thy benignity I was about to have my being. And where shall I be, O my God, after the days few and evil of this my pilgrimage, when I, who now am, shall be no more; who indeed am even now but the spoil of time, and a vapour, and a smoke? I shall be in eternity, but in which? I hope indeed, in Thy mercy, that Thy right hand will lead me into the land of the living; and that in the manifold paths of this life Thou wilt be to me the Way, and in death my most desired Life.

Act of hu-
mility.

Giving of
thanks.

Where will
man be in a
short time?

This one thing only does Thy goodness require of me; that I should have ever before mine eyes my end, which is Thy glory and my own salvation. For if I fail to do this, Thou hast threatened me with eternal punishment; and if I do this, rewards, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, Thou hast deigned to promise. Alas, O my Creator, stretch forth Thy right hand to the work of Thine hands, that I may ever think of Thee, and speak of Thee, O my only good, and that I may so labour as that I may come to Thee, the Desire of the eternal hills. Shew me Thy righteous ways, and such as are free from all iniquity, and teach me Thy paths, that I may never decline from Thy Commandments, which I love above gold and precious stones.

Death and
life is set be-
fore thee.

Lo, before Thee and all the company of Heaven I purpose to walk through Thy grace, and serve Thee in the undefiled way all the days of my life; henceforth, whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I will do all to Thy glory, O Lord Jesu Christ: to Thy will only will I look, for I myself in any matter know not what to choose. For a way not unfrequently seemeth right unto a man and most short, when alas, it leadeth to death, to everlasting death. Man is wholly ignorant of his end, he knoweth not his way, his coming in and his going out. Therefore, do I pray Thee, O God, from the very bottom of my heart, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to direct me into the good way, by which Thou knowest that I shall attain unto the wished-for end, and the true harbour of this pilgrimage. Ever do as regards me Thine own good and most holy will: for to Thee my Lord and my God have I made known my cause; a thousand times have I consecrated myself to Thee, and again and again do I consecrate and devote myself wholly to Thee and for ever. Would that I could do so as often and with such earnest affection as I ought and desire; especially when I see that Thou hast given Thyself to me, hast given over to death Thy precious soul, and for my good even to-day dost give Thy Body and Blood. Lo, this day Thou art prepared to do our will, and at any moment to come down into the hands of the Priest; and shall it shame me to obey Thee? Yea, rather I will live for Thee, and my meat shall be to do all Thy will, and to love Thee with my whole heart. Amen.

RULES FOR KEEPING BEFORE ONE THE TRUE END OF LIFE.

AFTER this Meditation determine with thyself, first of all to direct thy course to the end of thy creation, and in the presence of God often renew this resolve; and enquire of thyself, For what end am I created? What is my object by these studies, thoughts, occupations of mine? Whither am I proceeding? For thou art going in that direction to which thy intention is carried. Yea more, for thou art thyself such as thine intention is: if that be religious, such also art thou; if that be worldly, such art thou; if that be perfect, such also art thou.

Secondly, reflect what are the ways that lead to that end, and choose out for thyself one that is suitable and conducive to the attainment of it. The steps in these ways are our thoughts, words, and actions. Wherefore, like a traveller, often keep asking thyself and others which is the right way, lest thou shouldst be deviating from it, and wilt have to return to it after great aberrations with sorrow.

It may be a third rule, since these things are every where meeting our eyes, to observe the crooked pursuits, and intentions, and errors of mankind; since almost all are seeking their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

The fourth and best rule is, instantly to return into the way, if by any sin thou mayst have deviated from it, by immediately stirring up in thyself repentance; a subject which will hereafter be considered under the head of timely conversion. But conversion, you must know, consisteth, first, in true contrition; secondly, in confession; and thirdly, in newness of life.

Repentance
brings back
into the way.

The fifth is, from the sight of all the creatures to arise into a temper of thankfulness, since they were all created for thy sake.

Elevation of
the soul from
the creatures.

The sixth. Sometimes in walking, or in solitude, to reflect on the immortality of the soul, on what shall be after this life, and where that eternity will be spent.

The seventh. From the corruption of all bodies, which we behold on all sides, and from the excellence of many, to acknowledge the nobleness of the soul, and its spiritual nature. For in like manner as these things exist which are sensible and material, so also do others which are beyond the senses and spiritual, which are immeasurably superior in dignity and power, as is evident in angels and devils.

The dignity
of the soul.

The eighth rule is, in the morning to direct the actions to God; and afterwards occasionally during the day, or at all events in the evening, to examine what progress hath been made toward that end; for not to go forward is to go backward.

Order thy
life in the
morning.

The ninth. And because man knoweth not his way, it is useful to ascertain also from others what they may think of thy way and of thy life.

Seek an
adviser.

A Prayer,

FOR THE FULFILMENT OF GOOD DESIRES.

Thou hast deigned, O most loving Master, Christ Jesu, with the sweat of Thy countenance, by Thine example and Thy blood to seal unto me this doctrine——. Blessed be Thou for evermore. Thou hast vouchsafed to set before me these rules, that I may follow the footsteps of Thy Saints and of Thee. And easy are they to fulfil; for, “Thy Commandments are not grievous.” Since therefore through Thee I am able, for Thy sake I wish to please Thee, mourning over all my sins. Blessed be Thou for evermore. “Thou visitest the earth and blessed it,” with the shower and dew of Thy grace; grant, I pray Thee, increase to Thy holy seed that is sown, that Thou mayest be blessed by me with the affections of my whole heart for ever. For if, when I know these things, Thy grace be given unto me in vain, what shall I answer when I die, and in the Judgment, to Thee and to Thy love and boundless goodness, for such examples Thou hast set before me? Grant me, therefore, both to will and to perform, and to love Thee, O Jesu, most worthy of all love, and to live unto Thee, O Thou Who art our life, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ejaculations.

TO CHERISH THROUGH THE DAY THE AFFECTION WHICH HATH BEEN
STIRRED BY MEDITATION.

"Make me to go in the path of Thy Commandments, for therein is my desire." Psalm cxix. 35.

"Shew me Thy ways, O Lord, and teach me Thy paths." Psalm xxv. 3.

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy Commandments, and I shall keep it unto the end." Psalm cxix. 33.

"Order my steps in Thy word, and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me." Psalm cxix. 133.

"Shew Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Psalm cxliiii. 8.

"O hold Thou up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." Psalm xvii. 5.

"Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm cxxxix. 24.



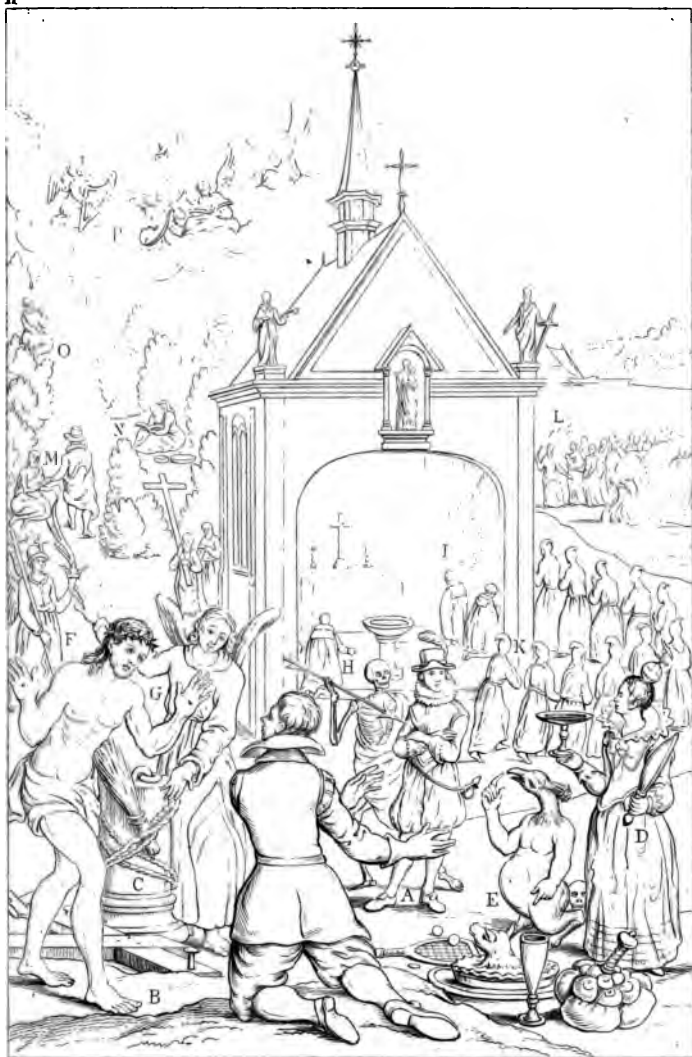


IMAGE THE SECOND.

WHY ART THOU DELAYING TO TURN THYSELF UNTO THE LORD GOD,
AND IN HIM UNTO ALL GOOD?

Be immediately turned, O thou sinner, to thy Creator and Redeemer, nor defer to do so, as the Doubtful man (A). For Death, though thou seest him not, is close beside thee. Lo, Jesus is ready to receive thee (B); behold His wounds, observe the instruments of His sufferings (C), and His most gracious approaches unto thee. Despise thou the World (D), and her de-cits; detest Sin (E), that most foul monster, and follow Christ. And now look to Virtue (F), which the Angel (G) pointeth out to thee, and consider the reward she beareth. In order that thou mayst attain unto her and her rewards, betake thyself to contrition for thy sins (H), and confession of them (I); and imitate the examples of penitents (K). In this way thou shalt be liberated from the yoke of Pharaoh, the spirit of evil, and from his bondage; in like manner as the children of Israel were on their coming out from the land of Egypt (L). Nor stop thou here, O pilgrim, but proceed onward to thy country; and make thyself a way and fortify it by Alms-giving (M), by Fasting (N), and by Prayer (O). Oh! how do the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth! (P). Oh, with what rewards will the soul of that penitent be crowned in Heaven!

On Timely Conversion.

REFLECTIONS ON TIMELY CONVERSION TO GOD AND TO OUR END, AFTER
WE HAVE WANDERED FROM THE WAY.

The ever-present *Guardian Angel*.—O Christian Pilgrim, what will it profit thee, to have known what is the Great End of man's life,—by faith to know God and the way to God,—and to have chosen for thyself a suitable state of life,—if therein thou turn aside out of the way, depart from God, and forget thy true end and blessedness? surely it would have been better for thee never to have known God and His will. For “the servant which knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes^c,” as also the Apostle saith, “they are without excuse who, when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and therefore God gave them over to the desires of their heart, to uncleanness, and to filthy lusts^d.” If then—O thou that redest

^e 'Tis grievous
to know God
and to sin.

these things—thou art in the number of those who through human frailty art still turned away from God, that is, from all that is good, from a most loving Father, from an all-powerful Creator,—I beseech thee, by the blood of Christ, and thine own salvation, “make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day^e.” For suddenly His wrath will come, and in the time of vengeance it will destroy thee: but return thou at this very instant, and sigh and lament before Him. For behold, His hand is stretched out; return thou, and be turned into the way, and to the Lord thy God. For He hath said,

Late conver-
sion seldom
true.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon^f.” Believest thou these things, and art thou still slow to return to the Lord, being set, as thou art, in the midst of so many enemies, and knowing assuredly that “the Son of Man will come at an hour when ye think not”—it may be, even at this very hour?

^c Luke xii. 47.

^e Eccclus. v. 7.

^d Rom. i. 20, 24.

^f Isaiah lv. 7.

Christian.—I believe, and am sure, and have no manner of doubt, that the end of my being is to serve the Lord, that for this purpose I was created, and that in Him all my felicity consists. But what shall I do, O mine Angel? Behold, how are mine iniquities grown over me, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me to bear. Alas! I perceive that I have gone down from Jerusalem to Jericho, whereas I ought to have gone up from Jericho to the heavenly Jerusalem.

The *Guardian Angel* near at hand.—O how great is the blindness of mortal man! To think that while they have yet time for ^{Delay hurt-}repentance and amendment, they should neglect this, and ^{ful.} therewith neglect also their true business and profit. But who hath promised them space for repentance, when once they have had it and neglected it? Do they expect, that the God whom they have despised will be the more merciful to them, the longer they go on in their sins or imperfections, and so load Him, as it were, with insults? Is it their intention, when the world hath cast them off as useless on account of age, and despised them, to look again to God? to assign to Him, from Whose bounty they have received all the good they enjoy, nothing but the dregs of their life, and to keep the good wine for the world? Consider, I beseech you, whether it be just, in the sight of our God before Whom we stand and speak, to offer the flower of our age to His ^{Shameless-}enemy, however earnestly he may desire it, and in fact to say, ^{ness a mark}“In Thy presence, O God, he shall have the flower, whatever in me is ^{of the sinner.} most choice and excellent; Thine shall be the remainder only, what is decaying or worthless. Now, when Thou invitest me to amendment and perfectness, I will not listen to Thee; but when the time shall come that all others shall forsake me, then I shall beg Thee to hear me. Now, I will consume my best energies in the service of the world, and for no pay; the world will I serve, and my own self-love: when my strength fails me, then I shall be willing to serve Thee; after I have continued to prefer the love of myself to Thee and Thy love, and to neglect all Thy glorious and good promises, and Thee Thyself also.”

Christian.—O how truly does this represent me! But, O merciful Jesu, Whose presence I acknowledge, Whose voice I once more hear most soothingly calling to me and saying, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you;” in Thy mercy do I place all my confidence, and trust that Thou wilt not reject this my late repentance.

Christ.—Every one that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out; yea, though I stand at the door and knock, and have ^{O how great is the goodness of God!} oftentimes been repelled.

Christian.—Thy mercy is over all Thy works. O that I had never,

never offended Thee, never returned hatred for Thy love, never driven Thee back when Thou followedst after me !

Angel.—Hope in the Lord, and do good, and thou shalt be fed with the riches of His grace. Only be not slow to turn Thyself to the Lord, and put not off from day to day ; for suddenly His wrath will come, and in the time of vengeance it will utterly destroy thee. Convert thyself with speed, lest at any time He ravish thy soul like a lion, and there be none to redeem or save thee. Knowest thou not that oftentimes the

Grievous
evils of
delay.

medicine is prepared too late, when the disease hath gained the upper hand ! What benefit, I beseech thee, tell me, can come of delay ? Thou seest how impossible it is to bend a tree except whilst it is yet a twig ; and happy wilt thou be if thou betimes shalt have bent thy neck to the sweet yoke of Christ Jesus our Lord ; if thou hast “ dashed the little ones of Babylon against the stones^g,” lest afterwards they should be too strong for thee to overcome them. What sick man waits till his disease hath gained strength ? What prudent traveller puts off his journey till the rain hath come and made the ford impassable ? Who would stay till the thread, which he can scarcely cut off, shall have increased to the size of a ship’s cable ? that is, till evil habit shall have bound him more strongly, till the nail shall have become more deeply fixed ? Who will continue to wander further, when once he finds that he is out of his way ? He that is unable to lift up the burden of his sins, that he may lay them down at the feet of Christ Jesus and His priest, how will it be possible for him to move it, when it is increased by sins innumerable ? Think then what advice thou wouldst give another in a like case [*here pause and dwell on this consideration a little,*] and regulate thine own conduct accordingly.

Christian.—Alas ! ought not this recollection of death to be sufficient to persuade me, seeing that it will come as a thief in the night, and in that very hour in which I expect it not ?

Angel.—At what time then dost thou think that death will come ? or, rather, tell me, oughtest thou not to be in readiness every hour to answer the call of the Judge ? Look back, I beseech thee, and let thy thoughts dwell on the pit of hell lying open beneath thee. Behold, on all sides of thee dangers out of number, and occasions, yea, even of death, eternal death. Art thou then even now prepared to accompany me into the Judge’s presence ? And yet darest thou to stand even for one moment before Him, in all thy sins and imperfections, without repentance ?

Take heed that this severe warning doth not become at the last applicable to thy case : thou that forgettest God in life and health, in death mayst forget both thyself and Him^h. Then more than ever

^g Psalm cxxxvii. 9.

^h Augustin.

will the enemy sharply set upon thee, encouraged by so many former victories, whilst thou in proportion art the weaker for those thy sins : so much the more violent will be his assaults, in proportion as thy strength of body and mind will be failing thee. For though, indeed, God hath promised pardon to the penitent, yet, as St. Gregory saith, to the sinner He hath promised neither grace to accomplish this, nor another day, nor even an hour to come. How heavy too will be the sentence passed upon thee in the judgment, if thou neglect this opportunity of attaining salvation, and at the same time shall have gained to thyself perdition, at the cost of extreme risk, labour, and toil? Opportunity of salvation not to be lost.

What glory and praise shall he then receive, who hath ill spent a whole life? What shall he reap who, while he lived, sowed for himself woes and punishments eternal? Can grapes be gathered of thorns, or figs of thistles? Is it the way to appease an offended Judge, to be still adding to thy load of crime?

Christian.—I see, too plainly I see, that no thought will be more sad through all eternity than this,—whilst there was yet time for pardon, to have treasured up unto oneself wrath against the day of wrath and vengeance; and so to have been the more unjust and ungrateful toward God, in proportion as He shewed Himself more compassionate toward us.

Angel.—Come now, even supposing thou shouldst *not* be cast off in thy last hour, what madness is it to continue thus in the condition of a robber and an enemy of God,—in the state of a slave rather than of a freeman,—to let all that time be lost and wasted, How great the madness of the sinner. in which thou mightst serve God and obtain His favour? But if thou dost indeed think to spend an eternity in His love, art thou willing to hate Him now? if hereafter thou shalt indeed love Him, will it not be a bitter thought to thee, that thou didst so long stand off from thy Heavenly Father and Lord, and from all that is good and holy? Here thou lettest no occasion slip by of increasing thy temporal gain; wilt thou cast aside every chance of securing that which shall be eternal? Behold! with what anxious solicitude did the Saints of old walk before God! how, like restless waves, were their hearts still moved with fear and trembling? and though their conscience were void of offence, yet did they never cherish feelings of confidence and security. But as for thee, though thou hast been admonished times out of number; and I would fain have joy in thy penitence and conversion; yet long, very long is the time that thou hast continued to resist God. And do not imagine that to be converted is so easy a thing. Hear what Ambrose saith, “I have had more difficulty in finding persons who have repented as they ought, than persons who have preserved their innocency¹.” And supposing

¹ *Pœnit. Lib. ii. c. 96.*

the kiss of peace to the prodigal son, pity to the miserable, to the poor destitute the bread of Angels, fountains of water to the thirsty, and to my soul Thyself! Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee! Wilt Thou be wrath with me even to the end; and when Thou art angry, wilt Thou not remember mercy? This hope is laid up still in my bosom; and though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee. Lord! all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee. Since therefore Thou hast said, that whensoever the sinner repenteth earnestly, Thou wilt not remember his iniquity; lo! I do earnestly repent, do Thou then forget mine iniquities; and call to mind Thy mercies, O Lord, and Thy loving-kindnesses which are ever of old. For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin.

Preparation
for Commu-
ning.

RULES FOR TIMELY CONVERSION.

1. RESOLVE with thyself that it is folly to prefer any business whatever before this, on which a man's entire salvation and all else depends. "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

2. Every evening meditate on one of the following considerations, whereby to arouse and encourage thyself; and at the same time, before thou fall asleep, put it to thy conscience whether or no thou art prepared to die. For sleep is the image and way of death. How often hath it happened, that he who hath laid down his head to sleep, hath been clothing himself unawares in his winding-sheet! How many have lain down in full health, whom death hath overtaken together with sleep! No prudent man surely could venture on sleep, exposing himself at the same time to the peril of eternal death. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.

3. Devote, at least, some of thy leisure hours to this business, especially on festival days. But we, alas! are come to such a state of blindness and lukewarmness, and we are so much engrossed in this world's business, that we can scarce obtain from it any leisure time at all, wherein to attend to ourselves, to the salvation of our souls, and to the service of Almighty God.

BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS TOWARDS CONVERSION AND A HOLY LIFE, TO BE OFTENTIMES THOUGHT OVER, AND ESPECIALLY WHEN NIGHT DRAWS ON.

FIRST, consider thyself as a pilgrim and a stranger, then ask thyself, Whither am I going? and for what end have I been created, and sent on this my journey of life? Doubtless, that I might find my way to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The question then is, Is my present course

Observe whither thou art tending.

and way of life directed toward this end? My God, when shall I come to appear before Thy face? Woe is me that my pilgrimage is prolonged: and I am constrained to dwell among the enemies of peace.

Consider secondly, that a traveller ought to make some progress every day, and to seek out such ways as are the shortest and safest: look Art thou progressing? whether thou doest this. Surely, if on a journey an opportunity occur of proceeding more expeditiously and more safely, thou wilt not scruple to avail thyself of it. If in any important matter or emergency various counsels are tendered, surely thou wouldst choose the safest, especially if it were offered by a person of superior wisdom. Be equally prudent then in regard of the welfare of thy soul. Listen to the admonitions of eternal wisdom, and as thou wouldst advise another, so act thyself: make frequent confession; often receive the Holy Communion; and in pity to thy soul be for ever striving to please God, so that never more, even for one hour, thou mayst continue at enmity with God, or be forsaken of Him, and so be in the power of the devil, living according to his will. Alas! how much wiser are the children of this world than the children of light in their generation!

Consider, thirdly, the manifold occupations of mankind, and to what ends they exhaust thereon all their powers of mind and body: forsooth, Vanity of the world. that they may be increased in wealth, or honour, or popularity, and this for a poor hour or moment of our life, and all these things too lost, even within this moment oftentimes, through some slight neglect, or by one malicious word, or by the stroke of a single ball, all destroyed. How much better then to have one's thoughts directed towards the attainment of eternal riches and honours, and the favour of the Eternal King! Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity!

Consider, fourthly, what are the kings and mighty ones of the earth, and then think what God is. What are they, but worms of the earth, and slaves or fellow-servants with us? to-day they are here, to-morrow Service of God and the world. they shall not be found. Consider now, how on the one side this worm and fellow-servant requires ready submission from men, and on the other side God requires the same. Then see how prompt and unwearied men are in serving the prince who yet is their fellow-servant, while the great God is obliged to employ promises and exhortations out of number, to obtain even the tenth part of what is due to Him, and even this not to be had unless the fellow-slave approve and permit it. Think, I say, how intolerable and unworthy such conduct is, and add, "But it is good for me to hold me fast by God, and to put my trust in the Lord God."

Fifthly, imagine first, that thou seest returned from the grave persons of thine own condition; whether Gentiles or Christians, emperors, Hear the dead. warriors, princes, counsellors, consider what amount of reward they have received from the world for all their labours. It is nought at best but a smoke of fame and honour; and then what doth it profit the poor wretches to be admired where they are not, and tormented where they are? In the next place, consider how many good deeds, tending to the glory of God, thyself or any like thee might accomplish, if thou wouldst undertake the same labours

and dangers in God's behalf which thou art willing to do in the service of the world. There is no question but every single person might arrive at great sanctity, and spread God's glory far and wide, if he would only bestow as much time and trouble on the glory of God and his own salvation, as he does on smoke and the world. Do thou, therefore, despise the world and cleave fast unto God, and say, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul!"

Consider, sixthly, in matters of business, first, that as without God thou canst do nothing, so to Him alone thou must humbly give up thine all; to Him, I say, "Who putteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble;" and before all things be careful that thou forfeit not His favour. Consider, secondly, that it is thy duty to take care, to the best of thy power, that servants and others in thy employment should be good persons. For it is plainly impossible that they who are enemies of God, and bondsmen of the devil,—of him who is still enticing and urging them into all that is bad,—that they should be fit instruments for the maintenance of the faith, the promotion of God's glory, or the accomplishment of any thing great and good. Consider, thirdly, that it is out of thy power to foresee future events; therefore, after thou hast used all diligence, do not forget that all must be left to the disposals of God's Providence. Fourthly, remember that inasmuch as He is Lord alone, alone Most High, thou must have His honour and glory always before thine eyes. Otherwise He will be grievously displeased, and that justly; nor will He prosper any of thy counsels wherein He shall see that His servant's glory is sought rather than His own: for He saith, "My glory I will not give to another." "Who is like unto the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high, and yet beholdeth things low and mean in Heaven and in earth?" "Him that honoureth Me I will honour; but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Consider, in the seventh place, the shortness of human life, and how it passes away like a ship, an arrow, a post, or a vapour. Send therefore before thee to that place where thou art to abide for ever, treasures of good works and alms-deeds; be more earnest to obtain principalities there than any thing here, where thou canst remain but one hour. Again, remember the uncertainty of life; therefore be prepared to go at any hour, nor ever venture to lie down to rest till thou hast examined thy conscience, and obtained pardon of God, being ever mindful of that warning from the lips of Eternal Truth, "The Son of Man shall come at an hour when ye think not."

Consider, in the eighth place, how kings and princes employ persons to take care of their money, and to take care of their health, and how they are glad to assign great rewards to any who prevent their pecuniary losses, or who point out the symptoms of a disease, or who discover the secret machinations of their enemies. Apply this to thine own soul, and have by all means a confessor, of whom thou mayst entreat that he would admonish thee, if at any time he should see thy soul in danger, if he should detect any disease in it, or any contrivances of thine infernal encmies, that so thou mayst be

able to meet the coming mischief. But do thou habitually call on God in such words as these—"Shew me Thy ways, O Lord, and teach me Thy paths." "O that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep Thy statutes." "I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed to keep Thy righteous judgments."

Ejaculations.

"If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready." Psalm vii. 13.

"Turn us again, O God; shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole." Psalm lxxx. 3.

"Turn us then, O God our Saviour; and let Thine anger cease from us." Psalm lxxxv. 4.

"Turn Thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God." Jer. xxxi. 13.

A Prayer

FOR PERSEVERANCE IN GOOD PURPOSES.

O Lord, my God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, I confess to Thee before all the company of Heaven, that I have hitherto been unfaithful to Thy Majesty, after receiving innumerable benefits from Thy bountiful hand, which I have made use of not for Thy service, but for rebellion against Thee. O Father of Mercies, have mercy upon me, for it grieves me exceedingly, and I come a suppliant unto Thee, like the prodigal, and cast myself at the throne of Thy glory; have regard to the work of Thine hands. Behold, I renounce Satan, and the world, and its pomps, and these things——. I resolve moreover in Thy presence to avoid those occasions——, as rocks of offence. I know that in the Day of Judgment I shall have nothing to plead in excuse; for Thou hast shewn me the way that I should walk in, Thou hast made known to me Thy judgments and Thy laws, as Thou hast not done to every nation; and hast given me grace enabling me to perform them. And certainly if I had done for Thee a hundredth part of what I have done and suffered for the world, I should indeed have kept Thy law, and been numbered among Thy friends and Thy children: but now I am not worthy to be called Thy son; but make me as one of Thine hired servants;—grant me grace, through the Blood of Jesus Christ, by which I may be able to fulfil these desires,—to serve Thee and Christ Thy Son,—and to live with Thee for ever. Amen.

On Penitence,

WHEREBY MAN RETURNS TO GOD AND THE WAY OF SALVATION.

AFTER that a man hath resolved in God's presence to return to the way of salvation,—to direct his steps towards the end for which he was created, and the true object of life,—let him set in earnest about the work of contrition and sorrow. For in this way, to speak briefly, he will go out of Egypt the three days' journey into the wilderness, and by the grace of God will triumph over Pharaoh and his army. Of these three days, the first may be termed Contrition, the second Confession, the third Satisfaction. And it may be added that of Satisfaction the three works are Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer.

As the Lord by His wonderful and sweet Providence hath appointed that the soul which "hath conceived sorrow and brought forth iniquity," must die the death, so hath He decreed that the same soul, after sinning, should be called back to life by conceiving true sorrow and contrition. And thus sorrow, the natural offspring of sin, yet most excellent if it be conceived out of love to God, destroys its unhappy mother, and restores to us salvation instead of ruin.

But sorrow is of two kinds; the one called Attrition, when a person from consideration of the foulness of sin, or from the fear of hell, or any like cause, has sorrow for his past conduct. The other is named Contrition, whereby a soul out of pure love to God,—and not in regard of punishment, loss of goods, or other trouble,—but for this alone groans and laments, namely, that he hath grieved a most merciful Father, hath wronged a most bountiful Master, Whom he was bound by every tie to love and honour; and so, earnestly wishes that he had never done any thing amiss (though possibly he may shew no sign of tears or other impassioned expression of feeling)—this is filial sorrow, most pleasing to our Heavenly Father, "working repentance to salvation not to be repented of." It is, therefore, of far more consequence to insist on the importance of this temper than on an anxious enumeration of past faults—(though generally the contrary rule to this is followed); some aids to Contrition are therefore here added. Did

Grief the
medicine
of sin.

Grief is
twofold.

Benefit of
contrition.

not the Magdalene blot out her sins with tears of sorrow and of love? The Publican too was received back again into the Divine favour, when he had from the inmost depth of a heart filled with love uttered that good and healthful saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Both these kinds of sorrow contain within themselves, though it be not always so expressed, a resolute intention of keeping the Commandments. Among these duties that of Confession Purpose of amendment. is by all means to be fulfilled in its season, seeing its force is so great as to change Attrition into Contrition. Remember, therefore, that thou frequently use thyself to Confession, that thou mayst make thy calling and salvation sure.

DISCOURSE OF CHRIST JESUS WITH THE SINFUL SOUL, TO STIR UP
CONTRITION OF HEART.

Christ.—Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of My mouth^m. Lo! I will demand of thee—, and answer thou Meⁿ. Have not I created thee out of My infinite and free love, to the honour and glory of My Name? And yet, is not thy heart conscious that thou art living before Me in such way as to bring dishonour on Me,—so that, if thy life were laid open before the world, My Name would, because of thee, be justly blasphemed, —and yet I have nourished thee up as a son, and exalted thee? Nevertheless, thou hast despised Me, and I kept silence: the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, yet thou hast not known Me. But because I am long-suffering towards the sins of men, therefore I have been forbearing toward thee. Consult thine own heart, and hear.

Christian.—Truly, O Lord, I am become like a horse or mule which hath no understanding. I have called Thee my Creator, my King, and my God; and yet to Thy dishonour I have preferred the vilest creatures before Thee. Nor indeed, if Thou wert to ask me, do I know of any ground or reason for my so acting, save that such was my will and pleasure, though Thou forbaddest it; it refreshed me, though it gave pain to Thee. Alas! from the sole of my foot even to the crown of my head, there is no soundness in me. But whither shall I go? To whom shall I flee for refuge, save to Thee, O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation? Cast me not therefore away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Stretch forth Thy right hand to the work of Thine own hands, O Thou my Lord and my God. The sinner mocketh God.

^m Deut. xxxii. 1.

ⁿ Job xxxviii. 3.

Christ.—"If I be a Master, where is My fear? If I be a Father, where is My love?" Dost thou indeed believe Me to be thy Lord, and canst thou at the same time despise Me? Dost thou call Me father, and think nothing of obeying Me or My commands, if only thou canst please thy deadly enemy. How often have I wished to gather thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? How often have I said, How long wilt thou endure to be with a heavy and faint heart? Wherefore lovest thou vanity, and seekest after lies? Thinkest thou that any wicked man believeth himself to be close to His Heavenly King, to be watched by Him, to be threatened by Him, and that he can do other than abhor His Presence? If a criminal lying in prison, expecting every hour to be placed before his judge, and hearing continually of multitudes being put to torments and death in the forum, for crimes like his own, would he not be terrified? And art thou ignorant, that for those, those very sins——whereof thou hast been guilty, multitudes of persons have suffered from the terrible writhings of conscience; if they have not been utterly sunk in the misery and flames of hell. Canst thou then endure to laugh, to be a slave to self-love and to the world, and to remain in sin, even for one moment? If hitherto I have called, and thou hast refused; I have stretched out My hand, and thou hast not regarded, but hast despised all My counsel; now at least return thou while there is a time of mercy, while the door of salvation is yet open, lest if thou delay to return the time shall come—a time of grief to Me as well as to thee—when thou shalt entreat that the doors of My mercy may be opened, but the voice of My justice must answer thee, "Verily, I know you not."

Christian.—If Thou, Lord, shalt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall endure it? Remember, I beseech Thee, O Lord Jesu, that Thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt Thou bring me into the dust again? Hast Thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews°. And inasmuch as Thou hatest nothing that Thou hast made, remember Thy mercies of old; let Thy tender compassions speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low. Hath not light been now given to me, miserable that I am? hast Thou not granted me mercy and life, and with this Thy visitation guarded my spirit? O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! O what a bitter thing it is to me that I have forsaken Thee, the Lord my God! whilst I call to mind what is written concerning Thee, "The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works!"

° Job x. 9, 11.

P Jer. ix. 1.

Christ.—Call up to thy recollection the kindnesses which I have bestowed on thee, and let us stand together in judgment. If thou hast any plea whereby thou mayst justify thyself, now declare it. Hast thou not requited Me with manifold evils —, in Ingratitude of the sinner. return for the good things which I have granted thee, and to the great discomfort of My soul? Have I not redeemed thee at the great price of My own Blood, not with corruptible things, as gold or silver;—that thou mightest glorify Me, and bear Me in thy body? But what hast thou done?

Christian.—Alas! I have sold my soul for nought. For what are all these things which thine Apostle truly counted as dung, that he might win Thee? Folly of the sinner. “And what doth it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Nay, is it possible, that I should have preferred and sought after such things as these, and which yet I could neither obtain, nor if I had obtained could keep, and that Thou, Who art my only good, shouldst be esteemed by me of so little worth, that I should be willing to sell and part with Thee, not for a mess of pottage like Esau, nor with Judas for thirty pieces of silver, but for mere smoke and some empty gratification?

Christ.—Remember, that for thy sake I gave up My precious soul to death, that thou mightest place thy hope and confidence in Me. But in truth thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass^q. Is it so, My son, that thine eye is evil, because I am good? Why dost thou turn away thy face from Me, Who am thy Life and Salvation? Why hast thou made a covenant with death, and with hell art at an The sinner maketh a covenant with Satan. agreement long ago, to thine own destruction, and to My dishonour^r? Tell Me, I beseech thee, why art thou willing that Mine enemy should triumph over My blood and the price thereof, even thine own self, thou, whose life was purchased by My death!

Christian.—My soul is weary of my life: I will leave my complaint upon myself: I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. And what shall I say unto Thee, O Thou infinite Goodness! “I will say unto God, Do not condemn me^s,” for for my sake Thou wert Thyself condemned. Do not cast me off, for for three-and-thirty years Thou didst seek after me. Do not forget me, Thou Who hast graven me upon the palms of Thine hands.

Christ.—Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee^t. For I have loved thee, and have washed thee in Mine own blood, but those enemies, the world and the flesh, thirst after thy blood. To whom, tell Me, I beseech thee, is it good for thee to cleave? I have created thee, and thine enemy

Oh, how great is the goodness of God!

^q Isaiah xlviii. 4.

^s Job x. 1, 2.

^r Isaiah xxviii. 15.

^t Isaiah xlix. 15.

endeavours to destroy thee in a thousand ways. I have invited thee with promises of eternal reward, and still do invite thee ; he entices thee with the vainest of pleasures and with eternal punishments. I offer thee the highest of all goods, he the worst of all evils. Shall I then cry aloud and call to thee, and wilt thou not hear Me ? Shall I entreat, and receive nothing but a repulse ? Shall I weep for thy dangers, and then be derided by thee ? Shall I call thee back from those evil ways, and thou still continue to take pleasure in them, yea, even to seek them more and more, and so to grieve Me ?

Christian.—Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we are consumed in Thine anger, and overwhelmed in Thine indignation. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thy face, and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. I am full of shame, when I call to mind the base gratification, the empty vanities, to obtain which so much labour was required, and to preserve them so much care—and yet they cannot be preserved—that for such things as these, I say, the slavish rules of the world must be obeyed, and Thy commands neglected,—more precious though they be than gold and the topaz stone, and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb,—that they should not be submitted to either for hope of eternal reward, or for fear of eternal punishment,—it does indeed shame me to think.

Christ.—Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and let her gates be very desolate^u. For My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living water, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water. For what fruit hast thou in

The fruit of sin. those things whereof thou art now ashamed ? What hath pride profited thee, or what good hath riches with thy vaunting brought thee ? And now what dost thou seek for thyself in the way of Egypt, that thou mayst drink of the troubled waters ? and what wouldst thou in the way of the Assyrians, that thou shouldst drink of the waters of the river^x ? Have not I planted thee a choice vine, wholly a right seed ? how then art thou turned to be a degenerate plant, a strange vine, unto Me ? I looked that thou shouldst bring forth grapes, and lo ! thou hast brought forth wild grapes^y. What could I have done more in My

The sinner sheweth the goodness of God. vineyard that I have not done in it ? What iniquity hast thou found in Me, that thou hast gone far from Me ? Have I not been silent ? have I not held My peace ? Have I not been patient, long-suffering, and merciful towards the wickedness of men ? Nevertheless, after all these things, because I was ready to pardon, and full of goodness, thou hast the more often offended Me. Thou hast broken the yoke, and hast said, I will not serve Thee. Thou hast gloried in thy wickedness, and become powerful in iniquity. Dost thou thus re-

^u Jer. ii. 12.

^x Jer. ii. 18.

^y Isaiah v. 2.

quite Me, O foolish people and unwise? Where are thy gods, thy consolations, wherein thou hast trusted? are they not all passed away as a shadow, and as a ship of which no trace can be found in the waves? Whatsoever the world chose, whatsoever the flesh delighted in, that thou hast presently done, and this too not without a great exertion. That which I commanded, advised, entreated by My Love and by My Blood, that thou wouldst bear about My dying in thy body,—this thou hast despised: and lo! that which through so many years I have enjoined and advised by My Prophets and Heralds,—namely, thy Superiors,—hast thou not oftentimes made no account of? Is this thy first love, wherewith in Baptism thou didst renounce all for My sake? wherewith thou offeredst thyself to Me without reserve? Is this the return thou makest to Me? But thou sayest, There is no hope; no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.

Christian.—Ah! Lord; who shall stand to speak with Thee; or who shall answer Thee one of a thousand? The Heavens are not clean in Thy sight, and in the Angels Thou hast found per-
No man can of himself satisfy God.
 verseness. But, O merciful Jesu, my Redeemer, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*? is it not Thou alone Who canst do this? Thou indeed hast numbered my footsteps; nevertheless, be Thou merciful to my sins, and remember that my life is wind. What shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? Wherefore hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee? And, alas! I am become a burden to myself^a. Behold! my grief hath overwhelmed me, and all my limbs are reduced to nought. Thine arrows are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit^b. O who will grant me that I might be as in months past, in the days when Thou, O Lord, didst preserve me.

Christ.—Wherefore hast thou withdrawn thyself, and wilt return no more unto Me? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire^c? Yet thou hast forgotten Me, thy Creator, days without number. Return, lo! I have prepared for thee the best robe; I have stretched forth My arms to embrace thee. I have bowed down My
Christ inviteth.
 head to grant thee the Kiss of Peace.

Christian.—Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy Son: nevertheless, look Thou upon me, and pity me, for I am desolate and in misery. Woe is me! I find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind: and the good that I would I do not.

Christ.—Lo! I will plead with thee, and will set thine own face against thee. If thou wert taken with any disease, wouldst thou not be willing to spend very much on physicians? If there were a suit at law

* Job xiv. 4.

^b Job vi. 4.

^a Job vii. 20.

^c Jer. ii. 32.

about an acre of land, wouldst thou not even cross seas to support it?

Oh, how easy
is it to serve
God! And if thou wouldst bestow but a tenth part of the pains
which thou takest for this world on the concerns of thy soul,
wouldst thou not have led a blessed life? Have I not said,

Who am The Truth, My yoke is easy, and My burden is light: also,
My commandments are not grievous: and dost thou assert that they are
difficult? Dost thou by word, and deed, and example, draw others on to
destruction? I cannot abstain, thou sayest, from this com-

The sinner
belieth him-
self.

pany, from this danger of sinning; and if any one even thy most
intimate friend had uttered but one injurious word, thou
wouldst not be reconciled to him or forgive him, no, not if thou wert
entreated. If a place or a friend were infected with pestilence, thou
wouldst avoid either of them altogether; or if a physician should forbid
thee to taste this or that kind of food, thou wouldst obey him; but when
I call upon thee to consider thy soul's good, to bring thy body into sub-
jection, to please Me and obey Me, is it so that thou wilt not yield to do
or to suffer any thing? Am I then the only one whom thou wilt not
fear? and wilt thou not be grieved at My presence? Have I not
earnestly adjured thee, saying, Hear My voice, and thou didst not hear,
nor inclined thine ear, but hast gone on in the wickedness of thine evil
heart? Lo! in this hour, it may be, thou shalt be snatched away to a
most strict judgment, thou shalt pass to thy eternal home; and lo! even
yet thy hands are full of blood. O my people, what have I done unto
thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? Call to mind, O Christian soul,

Consider the
sufferings of
Christ. My gall, and poverty, and tears, wherewith I have interceded
for thee, because thou wert precious in My sight: but thou
hast committed fornication with many lovers. Nevertheless

return, return^d. Lo! I stand at the door and knock; open to Me, My
sister, My spouse; My head is all wet with the dew of blood, and My
locks with the drops of the night^e.

Christian.—I have provoked Thine indignation, O Lord, and I have
sinned above the number of the sands of the sea; I acknowledge my
transgressions; but do not Thou destroy me together with mine iniqui-
ties, nor reserve evils for me for ever; shew me Thy goodness, and call
to mind Thy mercies of old, and cast all my sins behind Thy back. For
lo! in the presence of Thee and all the company of Heaven, I sincerely
resolve never any more to offend Thee. I resolve to avoid all occasions
of sin, henceforth to serve Thee my God, and no longer to be a slave to
the devil. Accept me, O Lord Jesu, despise not a heart which is
broken and humbled. Thou Who searchest the heart and the reins,
Thou knowest, yea, Thou knowest my sighing and my longing desires.

^d Jer. iii. 1.

^e Cant. v. 2.

Prayer, or Act of Contrition.

O Lord Jesu Christ, Thou Who art truly God and Man, Creator and Redeemer, it grieves me in my inmost heart to have offended Thy Divine Majesty, because Thou art my God and my all, Whom above all things I love and adore. Therefore do I firmly resolve and determine, that I will never more offend Thee, but that to the utmost of my power I will avoid all occasions of sin, also that I will make dutiful confession of all my faults, and accomplish whatever penance shall be assigned to me to do. And to give the fuller proof of my sincerity, I do this day offer to Thee myself, my life, all that I have, and all that I can do. And as I beseech Thee with all humility, and ask pardon for my faults, so do I trust that I shall obtain it through Thine infinite loving-kindness and mercy, and through the merits of Thy most precious Blood, and most sacred Passion. I trust also that Thou wilt give me grace to amend my life, and to persevere in all goodness even to the end. Amen.

Act of faith.
Of contrition.
Purpose of
amendment.
Confession.
Oblation of
self.
Act of hope.

RULES FOR THE FREQUENT EXERCISE OF CONTRITION.

FIRST, it is well to practise this especially in the morning, according to the advice of wise and religious men, that so when we have made our peace with God, our works, otherwise dead and unfruitful, may tend to everlasting life.

Secondly, in the evening, when we examine our conscience, that so we may be prepared against sudden death.

Thirdly, after the commission of any more grievous sin, lest we remain in enmity with God.

Fourthly, before every prayer; for "praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner."

Fifthly, in all danger of death, and grievous trial or temptation.

Sixthly, whenever any difficult matter is to be taken in hand, and there is need to implore the aid of the Heavenly Grace.

Now an act of contrition may be done in a very short space. Thus David was truly contrite, when he said, "I have sinned against the Lord," and received the prophet's answer, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin."

Accustom thyself, therefore, either by the mention of the Sacred Name of Jesus, to contemplate and scrutinize (as it were) the greatness of His love toward thee; or else from the view of the creation around thee, or from the recollection of some special mercy, lift up thyself to the love of God, and say in thy mind,—O my God, I grieve from my whole heart for all my sins, and for this more than for any other cause, because they are displeasing to Thy Divine Majesty. Or thus: O Jesu, my love for Thee fills me with grief that I have offended Thee. During the recitation of the Divine Services for the day, if Thou wilt, thou mayst thus stir within thee emotions of contrition and love. O Jesu, Thou my great and only Good, wherefore have I ever offended Thee? Ah! I

do truly repent, from my very inmost heart, and most of all because "against Thee only have I sinned." And what am I now doing? Thee alone do I regard, Thee alone do I love, beyond all things, and for Thine own sake, Who art worthy of this my love, and of the love of every creature for ever.

Exhortations.

"Let us draw near, O my soul, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16.

"Turn again to the Most High and turn away from iniquity; for He will lead thee out of darkness into the light of health, and hate thou abomination vehemently." Ecclus. xvii. 26.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

"O remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but according to Thy mercy think Thou upon me, O Lord, for Thy goodness." Psalm xxv. 6.

"Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm li. 10.

"O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon; for we are come to great misery." Psalm lxxix. 8.





IMAGE THE THIRD.

BEFORE THOU PRAYEST PREPARE THYSELF.

Since Prayer (A) is a conversing with God, betake thyself to it with care, considering Christ as present (B): nor put it off as this Worldly man (C) does on account of any business of the World (D). But first, setting aside all other things, when thou art about to pray examine thy conscience (E), and cast under thy feet with detestation that most foul monster, Sin (F); which hath the head of the peacock, the belly of the dropsical, the feet of the goat, the tail of the scorpion. By the peacock is denoted the pride of life, avarice by the dropsy, lustful concupiscence by the feet of the goat; by the tail of the scorpion the poison of sin is signified, and by the skull its wages, which are death. Set before the eye of thine heart the sufferings of Christ, and the Ten Commandments of God. And with Prayer unite Fasting (G), (under which term is comprehended all mortification,) and also Alms-giving (H); for these two are the wings of Prayer. And now follow the guidance of thy guardian Angel (I) to works of good. Prepare thy mind with Silence (K), with Solitude (L), and religious reading, shutting the doors about thee in the secret chambers of thy heart. Stir up the affection of Hope (M), and lift up more earnestly thy prayer to the honour of God; for Prayer (N) hath the sword of the word of God, kindleth the heart into a flame, animateth to overcome vices. By these means endeavour to destroy thy Sins (O), and to obtain Virtue (P) from God. She standeth by the throne of God furnished with wings, to raise the soul from things of earth; and armed because she cannot be overcome by evil; but by means of the Cross and through hardships she obtaineth the crown. Prostrate therefore thyself before the Throne of Grace, and pray for her, either in the character of the criminal (Q), or of the poor man, or of the Bride. This preparation of the mind Moses hath shewn (R) when he appointed the Seventy to share his earthly labours, and retired to be alone with God.

Meditation

ON THE RIGHT ORDERING OF OUR PRAYERS.

Christian.—HERE in a desert and pathless way, where no water is,
God's pre-
sence. have I appeared unto Thee in Thy sanctuary, and in the pre-
sence of Thy saints, that I might behold Thy power and
glory. I sit here, good Jesu, alone, and groan inwardly; for what else
can I do in this vale of tears afar from Thee, to Whom I sigh? and here
I sit low, that I may raise myself above myself. Have regard unto me,
Petition for
grace. I beseech Thee. For unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes,
O Thou that dwellest in the heavens: for from whence
cometh help unto me but from Thee, good Jesu? But if the just, in
beginning his prayer, accuseth himself, where shall I, the ungodly and
sinner, appear? Behold my hands are yet full of blood, and mine ini-
quities are more in number than the hairs of my head. Have mercy
upon me, O Lord; and with Thy Blood, good Jesu, blot out, I beseech
Thee, mine iniquity: by that Blood I most humbly beseech Thee, I that
am a worm and no man; that I may be able to speak with Thee and to
Humiliation
of self. Thee, though I be dust and ashes, in the sight of Thy saints.
I am ashamed indeed to speak, because I call to mind (and I
shudder while I contemplate it) that I have despised Thee, and, when
Thou spakest, have stopped mine ears that I did not hear; but Thou,
Jesu, mine Hope, canst Thou, O my God, despise a contrite and humble
Act of con-
trition. heart? Thou canst not deny Thy Name which Thou hast
shewed unto me. For now I grieve from love toward Thee,
that ever, even by an idle word, I have dared to despise Thy precepts.

Christ, (as present and searching the heart.)—Thus is it meet to stir
up contrition before every prayer, for praise is not seemly in the mouth
of a sinner^a. And well hath My Psalmist said, “If I regard iniquity
in my heart, the Lord will not hear me^b:” as also My Disciple saith,
“If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God^c.”
And truly what boldness of face and arrogance is it in the uncon-
ciled sinner, after trespasses most grievous, to draw near to Me to

^a Eccclus. xv. 9.

^b Psalm lxvi. 18.

^c 1 John iii. 21.

ask the best gifts, when punishments are in store for him, and not rewards? So again it behoves thee, and all them that pray, to remember My Presence. For what greater indignity can be shewn Me, than to address Me without recognising Me as truly present, or to offer sacrifice as to an absent Lord? For prayer is a sacrifice: therefore hath My Psalmist said, "Let my prayer be set forth as the incense in Thy sight, O Lord; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice^d:" and "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and a contrite heart Thou, O God, shalt not despise^e." For thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh, or drink the blood of goats? Offer, therefore, the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most Highest^f.

Sense of God's presence to be sustained in prayer.

Prayer a sacrifice.

Christian.—Would that I could indeed offer a gift Thou shouldst not despise, but which should mount up as incense in Thy sight! O that the wood of my sacrifice, howsoever fully drenched in moisture, might yet be kindled, as that once by Elijah was, with Thy fire, the love that is of Thee, which Thou hast desired should be kindled vehemently. For as the matter is on which the fire feedeth, even so it burneth^g. O that, as Thy servant Bernard^h admonishes, I may ever remember, in entering upon prayer, the words of the prophet, "I will enter into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, yea, even into the house of Godⁱ:" since we must by all means enter at the time of prayer into the court of Heaven, that court, I say, in which Thou, King of kings, dost sit upon a starry throne, girt about with an innumerable and unspeakable army of Angels: whence also he himself, who had seen them, because he could find no greater number to name, saith, Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him^k. With what reverence, therefore, and awe and lowliness, ought a mortal man to approach thereto, even as it were some vile frog or reptile issuing forth and crawling from its marsh; with what trembling, and supplication, how humbly indeed, and anxiously;—with what full fixedness and attention of soul;—should a weak and wretched man venture to draw near to the Majesty of that Glory, in the presence of Angels, in the assembly and congregation of the Just? But to Thee, O Lord, Who raisest the needy out of the dust, and liftest up the poor from the dunghill, the supplications of the wretched cannot be displeasing. Accept, therefore, this my supplication, and my heart and my soul along with it, and let my prayer go up like the smoke of precious odours in

In praying we stand before the court of Heaven.

^d Psalm cxli. 2.

^e Psalm l. 13, 14.

^h Bernard. *Serm. de quat. mod. oran.*

^k Dan. vii. 10.

^e Psalm li. 17.

^g Eccclus. xxviii. 10.

ⁱ Psalm xlii. 4. Lat. vers.

Thy sight; and grant me to present my body and spirit a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Thee; let Thy fire fall down on them, O Lord, and consume the burnt sacrifice¹, and the wood and the stones, the dust also and the water of affliction which is round about me; unless it shall appear otherwise unto Thee for the glory of Thy Name.

Christ the Lord.—Remember, however, before thou prayest to prepare thyself, and be not as one that tempteth God^m. For does he
 Preparation for prayer necessary. not tempt Me who, without preparation, cometh unto Me, thinking of other things, and honouring Me with his lips, while his heart is far from Meⁿ? When, therefore, thou art about to pray, think with thyself, whether thou desirest to tempt and to provoke Me to anger by thy carelessness or contempt, or in truth to appease Me? Knowest thou not, how My saints and elect, even though in extreme watchfulness and keeping of their senses they walked ever before Me, yet
 Humbleness in prayer necessary. prepared themselves anxiously that they might converse with Me; since they knew that on their prayers their salvation itself, in great measure, depended. Dost thou not remember Job, how from awful reverence he says, I have feared God always, like waves swelling over me, and His highness could I not endure^o? See how the Publican stands afar off, and does not so much as lift up his eyes unto Heaven? See how Magdalene, standing at My feet behind, washeth My feet with her tears, and hath wiped them with the hairs of her head!

Christian.—I am ashamed to think with what diligence and zeal, and at what cost of time, an advocate will order his suit with the judge, that his client may be acquitted of the charge against him, or may win or keep some paltry little nook of land; and I, when I pour forth my
 We are pleading with God. prayer, know that I am now pleading before Thee, the Supreme Judge, and before Thy Council, and that the trial is for eternal punishment or reward; and can I then dare to be drowsy in prayer, and be wide awake in sports and fables? He that cometh to God, said Thine Apostle, must believe that He is. So I see, it is our unbelief and our
 God's presence. blindness which makes us fail to behold Thee as present, and renders us irreverent before Thee, before Whom all principalities tremble. Our soul is brought low, even to the dust, and our belly cleaveth unto the ground^p. Arise, O Lord, and help us. Whence, I pray thee, can it be, O my God, that we should forget Thee, whilst we are speaking to Thee, Who yet art more truly present unto us than we are unto ourselves?

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 38.

^m Eccles. xviii. 23.

ⁿ Isaiah xxix. 13.

^o Job xxxi. 23.

^p Psalm xlv. 25.

Christ.—Because ye often put a higher value on other things, and make them more your care than to converse with Me, and draw out of My fountains the waters of blessing. These cares, as thorns, prick the soul in meditation,—make it unfit for My holy inspirations,—shut out the aid which is needful to action; and thence it cometh to pass, that the speech or other employment which have been turned over in men's minds whilst they were praying, and preferred as it were to discourse with Me, have full often an unsuccessful issue.

It is but lost labour, My son, to rise up before the light; for as long as ye not only do not by prayer win light from Me, the Sun of Righteousness, but even shut it out, do ye not in vain attempt to proceed,—in vain handle these matters of business? Yea, by this perverted and foolish diligence do ye not even retard their success by various distractions? Therefore have I given warning by Ecclesiasticus: “The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure, and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad?” The true seed of My word, when it falleth amongst these thorns, which are the cares of the world, cannot but be choked; and therefore were it well, after Moses' example, to share your cares with others^r. Yea, see whether all thy actions are ordered as they ought to be, so that they do not disturb thee in thy prayers. Pharaoh held My people assiduously busied in works of brick and mortar, and in looking after straw, that they should not think of the sacrifice commanded them. But do thou unmask the wiles of the devil, and come and honour Me with the sacrifice of praise, for thither art thou to journey, where I shall shew thee My salvation.

Actions to be shared with others.

Christian.—Of a truth I see that nothing is more needful for us than to pray often, and in such a manner as is suitable for prayer; that is, as drawing nigh unto Thee, the King of kings, Who art all our good,—to have the fruition of Thee, and be delighted in Thee. For Thou the eternal Truth hast said, men ought always to pray, and not to faint: and by the Apostle hast admonished us, to be praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance. For since there is no good thing that we can do without Thee, nor any evil that we can without Thee escape, in the great water-flood of our miseries, this only help have we remaining that we should direct our eyes unto Thee; nor are there any better means by which any one may further his ends, than by supplication unto Thee, O most merciful God, for Thou workest all things in all; and except the Lord build the house, their labour is but vain that build it. Truly Thou, O

^a Ecclus. xxxviii. 24.

^r Exod. xviii. 13, 14.

God, desirest most plentifully to bestow upon us Thy good things, and the defences of Thy grace, but yet Thou desirest that they be asked for by us, and therefore must we pray without ceasing*. As Thy servant Chrysostom hath rightly said, He furnishes weapons against himself, who does not weary his enemy by the perseverance of his prayers. Prayer is our bulwark and our unconquerable armour, a defence most safe and that never faileth, able with like ease to repel either a single foe, or countless thousands. And as this our body, if the soul be away, must needs be dead and stinking; so the soul, except it should rouse itself to pray, is dead and miserable, and of ill odour in Thy sight†. In Thy law therefore shall it meditate day and night, and all the day long will I meditate on Thy righteousness.

Christ.—But know that he ceaseth not to pray, who ceaseth not to do well, as once was said to Catharine of Sienna; again, truly, whoso knoweth to pray aright, knoweth also to live aright‡.

Christian.—Since so it is, is it not strange that all are not vehemently affected towards prayer and Thy converse? Is there then any bitterness in fellowship with Thee, O sweetness ineffable? How happens it, that long stories and trivial conversation bring no sense of weariness, sometimes, not even to a man professing religion; and yet to most long prayer and converse with Thee is irksome. When, says a certain one§, I see a man who loves not the exercise of prayer—is possessed by no vehement and glowing regard thereof,—at once I know that such an one has no eminent gifts of the Spirit. Again, when I behold any cleaving to, and never satisfied with the worship of God, and reckoning it amongst his greatest losses if he does not pray continually, him I conclude to be one who bears all virtues steadfastly in mind, and to be the temple of God. As often indeed as we are employed in prayer, we are united unto the Angels, and seem to leave whatever we have in common with the brute beasts behind us; for deprecation is the employ of Angels. And truly, what can be sweeter than such employments, when by them we have our conversation in Heaven, and thither our mind mounts up? for to Thee, its First Cause, and therefore its fittest help, it makes its way. Who shall give me wings as of a dove, and I will fly away and be at rest? Who shall bring me to Thy holy mountain? and when wilt Thou make me joyful in Thy house of prayer¶?

Christ.—Therefore watch unto Me even from the dawn, and let thy soul desire Me in the night season. Nothing indeed more angers Me, than when prayer, or converse with Me, hath other occupations preferred before it. What? I stand at the door and

* 1 Thess. v. 17.

† August. Psal. cxviii.

‡ Chrysost. *περι προσευχης*, lib. 1 & 2.

§ Chrysost. *Ibid.*

¶ Isaiah lvi. 7.

How irreverence may be shewn in prayer.

knock, and shall I be repulsed? wilt thou refuse Me audience or converse, till the very dregs of men and things have had their turn before Me, and even then go on with their din to interrupt My words and thine? Whence My Preacher saith, This only have I found, that God made man upright, and he hath mixed himself up with infinite questions^v. And thus the cloud that prayer should not pass through, is one a man makes unto himself^a. Tell Me, if a man had found out some instrument with which he might procure all good things unto himself, like the philosopher's stone, with what care, think you then, would he preserve it?

Christian.—It is this, I see, that makes us so lukewarm in praying, that we have not such faith as we ought in the efficacy of prayer.

Christ.—Yet, have I not often said, Ask and ye shall have; seek and ye shall find: and again, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and they shall happen unto you: and again, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask in faith nothing wavering, for let not him that wavereth think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord? Are these true words? If they be so, how can ye distrust Me, when ye have as an earnest My Blood and My death? It is true, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, nor are ye sufficient of yourselves to think any thing as of yourselves, but your sufficiency is of Me; but then I am at all hours ready, and even though thou shouldst come to Me at midnight, I will rise and help thee. Nevertheless, remember what I admonished thee, that thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and having shut to the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee. Therefore love solitude all thou canst, for in it am I wont to speak to man's heart.

Confidence
in prayer
necessary.

Prayer seeks
solitude.

Christian.—Yea, they only, as I hear say, with most pure eyes behold Thy Godhead, who, hasting up from lowly and earthly works and thoughts, retire into the lofty mountain of solitude. For in silence and in confidence, as Thy prophet saith, is our strength^a.

Christ the Lord.—Forget not either the warning which My Angel gave to Tobias, saying, Prayer is good with fasting and alms^b. Render then alms, either corporal or spiritual, and to that end observe the poor man waiting at the door of the Temple; and, as My servant Chrysostom recommended, keep ready a little chest at home, into which, when thou art about to pray, thou mayst cast thine alms. So also mortification, which is all included in the name of fasting, either actually practise, or else resolve upon.

Alms the
accompani-
ment of
prayer.

Christian.—From these things I gather that all virtues go to make up

^v Eccles. vii. 29.

^a Isaiah xxx. 15.

^b Lam. iii. 44.

^b Tobit xii. 8.

perfect prayer; and that nothing is more required by Thee. For this reason hast Thou always, through Thy Church, called us to the frequent and stated Hours of prayer, so solemnly enjoining the strict performance of them. Oh, how great is Thy charity, O my God, that of Thy infinite

Prayer a
sweet con-
verse with
God.

goodness Thou dost so desire my converse! Would that as Thou delightest in my converse, who am but a worm and ashes, so I also delighted in Thine! Would that at least my wretchedness might make me to pant after Thy converse, to thirst, as doth the hart, after the water-brooks! How sweet, said he, are Thy words unto my throat, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. True, that great abundance of Thy sweetness, I know, they only taste who persevere in prayer; who seek and desire Thee only, Thee all our good, with the whole heart. For to whom wilt Thou teach knowledge? and whom wilt Thou make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts^c. O blessed Angels and Saints of God,

The employ-
ment of An-
gels.

ye already taste and see how sweet the Lord is; all your employment is prayer, and the praise of God is in your mouth. Sing, I beseech you, to my Lord a new song in my Father's land for me an exile: sing for us also, the wretched ones; sing praises lustily unto Him with a good courage. For I, alas! often whilst in the purpose to pray I desire to plead my own cause, do but make myself guilty. We desire to praise our and your God and Lord, and often, wretched that we are, offend only, and lo! in lieu of grace we receive back wrath. O thrice mighty God, Who dost balance the world on three fingers^d, and upholdest all things by the word of Thy power^e, have respect, I beseech Thee by the bowels of Thy compassion, unto my frailty, from which it cometh that I speak less reverently with Thee than with a fellow man. Shame, shame it is to hear how even a heathen^f may teach us: "So speak with God as in man's hearing, so speak with man as in the hearing of God!" Why should it seem strange to us, if sometimes Thou hearest not us, who scarcely deign to hear and to talk with Thee?

Application
to the Com-
munion.

And yet, O infinite goodness! Thou stoopest day by day from the highest heaven, and dost put Thyself in the hands of Thy priests, that Thou mayst give me Thyself, mayst nourish me, and strengthen me, and mayst speak to my heart, and I, wretched worm of the earth, to Thine, that runneth over with love to me, O Thou Who art my one and only Refuge. But thus Thou comest in mercy, to be near at hand to see my necessities, and to hear my prayer; and what is my prayer? that Thou wouldst grant me from this moment for ever to love Thee, from this moment to stand before Thee for ever. Come, there-

^c Isaiah xxviii. 9.

^e Heb. i. 3.

^d See Isaiah xl. 12. Vulg.

^f Seneca.

fore, come, descend before I die, Thou that art my life, that I may live. Descend, I beseech Thee, into the lower parts of the earth, that is, into my soul, and speak presently to my heart : but give me also, O spotless Mirror, a clean heart to set Thee in, and clear eyes to see Thee with, and pure hands to embrace Thee withal, and ears unstopped to hear what Thou speakest in me, and to cleave unto Thee and love Thee all the days of my life. Amen.

A Prayer,

FOR REVERENCE AND DEVOTION IN PRAYING.

O God most mighty, I know that Thou art present here and every where, and art of infinite Majesty, in Whose presence all powers may tremble, and all the sons of God rejoice : with what lowliness then were it meet, that I, who am but dust and ashes, should appear in Thy sight!—with what thankfulness before Thee, Who hast created me out of nothing, hast redeemed me with the Blood of Thy Son, and hast vouchsafed me innumerable benefits all the days of my life! And yet, alas! I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea, neither am I worthy to come into Thy sight! But whither shall I go from Thy presence? Rather will I come to Thee the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, and will say, Father, I am no more worthy to be called Thy son, but make me as one of Thy hired servants^g; we are all become as an unclean person; and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And now, O Lord, Thou art our Father, but we are the clay : Thou art our Father, and we are all the work of Thy hands. Be not therefore wroth, O Lord, to the full, and remember not our iniquity any farther; behold, see, we are all Thy people^h. And Thou hast said, “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be openedⁱ.” But what do I ask, except to love Thee, to receive and embrace Thee in my heart, that Thou mayst turn Thy face unto me? why do I knock, except that Thou shouldst open for me, and for those for whom I am bound to pray, the fountain of Thy mercy? And if every one that asketh receiveth, then even I hope to do so, for that I also though most unworthy am Thy servant^k. I know that

Self-humiliation.

Thanksgiving.

Act of contrition.

Act of confidence.

^g Luke xv. 18, 19.

^h Isaiah lxiv. 6, 8, 9.

ⁱ Matt. vi. 7, 8.

^k Bernard, Sermon de Nativ.

for my numberless sins, in the secret place of Thy royal palace sentence of death has passed upon me ; but I come, my God, that I may propitiate Thy countenance. Grant me, I beseech Thee, by the blood of Thy Son, that my prayer be not turned into sin, and cast me not away from Thy presence. I acknowledge, O Lord my God, that I can do nothing without Thee, and all my hope I place in Thee, and all things I commit unto Thee ; that my prayer and all my doings may be set forth before Thee as incense ;—that Thy mercy may descend upon me, by which I may be enabled rightly to perform to the glory of Thy name what Thou requirest of me, especially my prayers ; and may be joined unto Thee, my God, my all, from Whom and in Whom and through Whom are all things. Forbid that henceforth, when Thou invitest to divine converse and knockest at the gate, I should ever neglect Thee for the deceitful business of the world ; or that I should be discomposed and hasty, when I, who am wont to occupy months and years in other things, am about the most weighty and profitable of all employments. Lo, I come, with all sincerity, to offer unto Thee a contrite and humble heart, which Thou art not wont to despise ; secure of Thy promise, that Thou wilt give to me that ask, wilt offer Thyself to me that seek, wilt open to me that knock ; and wilt grant me to overcome my vices and imperfections —, especially if my prayer be joined with fasting and alms. O Lord, Who alone canst make clean one conceived of an unclean seed, cleanse my heart and my lips that they may rejoice when I sing unto Thee, and let the rest of my thoughts keep holiday unto Thee for such a Guest, for Thy advent, for Thy love, as I trust by Thy grace to do with Thy saints and Thine elect in all eternity ! Amen.

THE METHOD OF PREPARATION FOR PRAYER, AND OF RECOLLECTION
AFTER IT.

IN the first place, thou shouldst distribute thy time and affairs, so far as is possible, the day before ; and the having a fixed time assigned for prayer and Communion of the Lord's Supper, St. Ignatius used to say, is of wonderful use towards peace of mind and spiritual progress. For by this method our cares are lessened, which also, after Moses' example, it is advisable to share with others, when it is practicable.

Secondly, before thou sleepest, occupy thy mind with religious reading, and then with meditation and tender thoughts: to which end imagine thyself standing by the Cross ; or in the presence of God and the Holy Trinity ; or in the place where the Mystery, which forms the

What we
ought to
do before
sleep.

¹ Job xiv. 4 ; Ezek. xvi. 4, 9 ; Psalm lxxi. 23.

proper subject of the next day's meditation, was wrought. This is required in order to realize the place; this being nothing else than a man's fancying himself, either, e. g., in the wilderness, or in Heaven, or in hell; or in presence, sometimes of the Infant Christ, sometimes of Christ Crucified, as the case may be; and so to chain down the wandering imagination, before prayer and sleep. Nor is this of use only in meditation, but also in all our uttered prayers. In this way some will visit sacred places only in spirit, yet often in more profitable pilgrimage, than if their bodies went there.

But observe, that thou shouldst appoint thyself, every day, some religious reading, since in this God speaks to us. For what else, says St. Gregory^m, is Holy Scripture, but a letter from the almighty God to His creatures? Wherefore its perusal must be gone about with attention and reverence; not hastily, but as though thou wert listening earnestly, to hear what the Lord may speak. And that He *may* vouchsafe to speak to thee, thou shouldst purpose in thyself, before thou readest, to perform what the Divine Goodness shall vouchsafe to put into thine heart. After thou hast read thou must give thanks to God, and must lay up some sentences in the storehouse of thy memory, according to the advice of St. Thomas Aquinas. O, how would the treasure grow, if something were daily added to it! Of which since Religious Societies have daily at their meal-time such opportunity, happy will they be, if they do but know their own blessedness.

Observe, that when the heart feels dry and barren, reading may supply the place of meditation, especially if we dwell on the most edifying sentiments: or, at any rate, if we then adopt that course of reading in which we have sometimes felt a ray of Divine Grace shining upon us.

Thirdly, it is profitable to resolve on some work of mercy, spiritual if not corporeal; and some self-denial also; that no day pass without a line of this sort also being added. The next day begin, both in the morning, and as often as you say your prayers, by putting worldly concerns aside, and casting them upon God, which is, in truth, furthering them by your prayers. After that, awaken in thyself contrition before all thy prayers; for we know that "God heareth not sinners." Thirdly, make it the object of thy prayer, not to seek comfort, but to give honour to the Divine Goodness, and to obtain virtue and holiness. To this, then, should it be directed, that we may have strength to overcome our infirmities, and may so wrestle with God in prayer, that as in the Patriarch Jacob, so in us, the sinew of the thigh of lust may shrink, as God blesseth us. But let it be the aim of our prayer to acquire the grace most needful to us, and to root out our especial sin, or that which most hinders our spiritual progress: nor will it be difficult to one who knows himself and feels his own sinfulness, in all his prayers and meditations to seek out remedies for these.

Here observe that, with regard to what is said of addressing prayer to a cer-

^m Greg. lib. iv. Ep. 40.

tain end, this applies also to prayers that are made aloud; thus to repeat particular psalms, according to our different needs, is profitable, and fixes the attention; in like manner to offer up particular psalms to God for particular blessings.

Fourthly. See God and His Angels present, and awaken in thyself great reverence, and very humbly ask leave to speak with the Divine Majesty, and elicit separate acts of faith, hope, and charity, with three bendings of the knees, if the place allows it. And take notice that it is useful to keep in remembrance the companionship and presence of our guardian Angel, as well in our other employments as in prayer.

It is also a profitable exercise, in order to spiritual tenderness and recollection, to assume the character sometimes of a criminal at the bar, sometimes of a poor beggar. Humbleness and devotion of the outward bodily gesture conduces too not a little to fruitfulness in prayer; especially since we have an example in Christ the Lord, Who "kneeled down and prayed," and Who "fell on His face." On which Augustine observes—Since these movements of the body cannot be made except by some antecedent movement of the spirit; so in some mysterious manner, by their outward and visible performance, that inward and invisible act, which gave them rise, is in itself increased.

After prayer it is right to rise up from it reverently; to examine what imperfections have crept into our service, and ask pardon for them; to render thanks for God's benefits and gifts; to go over our holy determinations; and afterwards to keep up the remembrance of these throughout the day, and diligently to observe all opportunities of practising them.

ejaculations,

BY WHICH WE MAY RENEW THROUGHOUT THE DAY THE HOLY DESIRES WE HAVE EXPRESSED IN OUR PRAYERS, AND MAY AGAIN PREPARE THE SOUL FOR PRAYER.

"O God, my God, early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth after Thee." For prayer is the fountain of the thirsty soul. Psalm lxiii. 1, 2.

"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe: yea, my delight shall be ever in Thy statutes." Psalm cxix. 117.

"My delight shall be in Thy statutes, and I will not forget Thy word." Psalm cxix. 16.

"Lord, what love have I unto Thy law; all the day long is my study in it." Psalm cxix. 97.

"Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight, as the incense." Psalm cxli. 2.

"I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed, to keep Thy righteous judgments." Psalm cxix. 106.

"In the volume of the book it is written of me that I should fulfil Thy will; O my God, I am content to do it, yea Thy law is within my heart." Ps. xl. 10.

"Thy words have I hid within my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm cxix. 11.

The Path unto the End,

OR A SHORT METHOD OF OBTAINING PERFECTION AND TRUE BLESSEDNESS IN EVERY CONDITION OF LIFE.

REMEMBER, O traveller, remember that thou art tending to a very long eternity, and that by the very short journey of this life. For our life is but an hour, but a moment. Desirest thou to know the way? It is the way of the commandments, an easy yoke in truth; for Truth itself hath declared it to be so. Dost thou doubt it? It were impious to do so. In this way is life, and therein thou canst run with him who hath said, "I have run the way of Thy commandments." Fearest thou lest thou shouldst not be able to persevere in this race unto the end? Thou canst do all things through Him that strengtheneth thee. Consider, I entreat thee, my brother, and remember we are free; no one, no one can seduce thee unless thou art willing to be seduced; no one can overcome thee by temptation unless thou art willing to be overcome. For God is faithful, Who will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able. Believest thou this? then lay aside distrust, and in the help of the Lord Jesus thou shalt leap over the wall. But perhaps thou art seeking the way? behold, my brother, here it is which the Lord by me will shew thee. It is short and pleasant, if we love our salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ. Aid me in turn with thy prayers, for a brother assisted by a brother shall be as a strong city: and I remember it is written, "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Let us therefore walk together, let us follow Jesus and His footsteps.

1. Every morning on first awakening, remember that thou art a traveller, and turn thine eyes to God and Heaven: and since thou must be on thy way, so arrange as to direct all thy steps, that is to say, thy thoughts, words, and works, to the greater glory of God from the highest love towards Him: and do this with such determination that thou wouldst rather die than offend God, thy most loving Father. In the course of the day turn again and reflect on this point, whether thine actions are leading thee thither: whether thou art walking with God and as in His presence; and if in any

What is to be done in the morning.

Right intention.

matter thou art doubtful of this, say, "Shew Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Reflect, O my brother, how great madness is it to plant thy step forward, and yet not to know in what place, whether in life or death eternal; for on each step thou takest, each hour and each moment, an infinite and interminable eternity dependeth.

2. Follow those guides which God hath given thee. Such are those guardian spirits which God hath set around thee which thou seest not; and those thy Spiritual Superiors which thou beholdest here on earth. Ask them advice, and shew them dutiful obedience as unto God; for he that heareth them, saith Christ, heareth Me. In addition to these, choose for thyself some upright man for thine adviser, selecting him with care, and then attending to his advice.

3. The creatures of God and His works will come before thee in thy way; from all these thou shalt receive edification, if thou considerest them all as made for thy sake alone and thy salvation: that God in all things is working for thee, and is so present with thee in all things, as if thou alone wert with God in all the world; and for all good things always praise God and attribute them unto Him; for the creatures are His servants, and afford all these things unto thee at His command. But if they should seduce thee from the right way, in that they are beautiful, curious, or pleasant, then at once know them to be thy seducers. Think for a certainty that eternal blessings will be lost by thee, or these things must be denied. Consider that these objects cannot fill thee or satisfy, and despise them as a snare or poisoned cup, of which one may say, "death is in the pot." What wise man will labour to fill a vessel full of holes, or any thing of such a kind, that the more you endeavour to fill is the less filled? Is it not certain, as the poet says, that the love of money and of all such things increases more and more as they themselves increase? nor can the heart of man be satisfied, or filled by any means whatever.

4. There will also meet thee evils and adversities, sickness, want, and the like. Attribute all these things to God,—receive them as from the hand of a father and physician, and commit thyself and them to His providential care; and since it behoved Christ to suffer, and so to enter into His glory, compare thyself and thine own evils with Him and His sorrows, and take up thy cross and follow Him. But beyond all things preserve peace of mind, as a most secure citadel, and place thy trust in God and

His providence; whatever may happen attribute it unto Him,—of future things enquire nothing further. He disposeth of us, and knoweth all things, and can do all things. All things live unto Him, and are for Him, and therefore commit all unto Him. Resign thyself.

5. There will also meet thee men who are the servants of God, His children, and members of Christ Jesus: canst thou, therefore, refuse to give alms unto Him Who seeketh it from thee in them, to Him to Whom thou owest thine own life? Sincerely, therefore, love thy neighbours, rejoice in the blessings they receive, and sympathize in their afflictions. But love especially thine enemies, as members of Christ, and His servants; and take heed that thou admit not the first rising of the slightest aversion, or bitterness, or contempt: but instantly exclude it by stirring up some exercise of love. Take heed that thou do not judge or severely reprehend any one, or prefer thyself to any one: for in that thou proudly judgest another thou condemnest thyself: for if thou wilt well look into thyself thou wilt find the same things that thou art censuring. If men should afford thee any good, recognise them as righteous men sent unto thee from God; if evil, do the same likewise; or, at all events, consider them as before-ordained and permitted by the decrees of Eternal Wisdom; and those whom thou art unable to correct, do thou commit to God. Alms are given to Christ. Love thy neighbour and thine enemy. Judge no one. Evils to be received as from God's hand.

6. Out of these select for thyself upright and good companions,—not seducers, and pestilent men, not the enemies of God, among whom thou thyself mayst be overtaken and punished;—but such as shall be able to share thy burdens, to support thee in the way, and afford thee guidance and guardianship. Take heed, also, that thou prefer not thyself to any one on account of any grace thou hast, for otherwise thou wilt lose the same. And thou knowest not whether thou be worthy of the love or the hate of God; nor hast thou any thing from thyself or which is truly thine own. Take heed that thou desire not to please any one but according to God. For is it worth while to displease God in order to obtain the favour of man? Beware also that thou take not up any contention with any one; but if any one force thee to go with him a mile go with him other twain; and agree with thine adversary whilst thou art in the way, lest thou be hurried to the Judge. What sort of friends to be chosen. Avoid vain glory. Seek not favour of man. Avoid contention.

7. If thou shouldst have fallen in the way, instantly arise by contrition and love of God; by weekly confession heal thy wounds, and repair thy strength by the Communion: frequent prayer will be the drink of the thirsty soul. If thou canst, let no day pass by without the reading of some spiritual book and meditating thereon. Rise again if fallen. Pray often.

8. Keep in the most diligent custody thy tongue, thine eyes, and ears, for he that offendeth not in tongue, the same is a perfect man; and however religious any man's life may profess to be, if he bridled not his tongue his religion is vain: be thou, therefore, true, and sincere, and loving, unto all men. He that is otherwise deceiveth himself, and shall be confounded by the truth; "but he that refraineth his lips is wise °."

9. Every day, at all events once, in the evening, consider, as if at the point of death, how much thou hast completed of thy journey, and examine thy conscience. Once, at the very least, during the week confess, and determine to avoid the hindrances or precipices on thy way, or wrong inclinations; and these daily study to mortify, even in little things, especially curiosity, appetite, pride, anger and sadness, for he that hateth not his own life by mortifying it cannot be a disciple of Christ. If the enemy crieth out against thee in the way as thou goest, by whispering in thine ear desponding or filthy thoughts, think nothing of it, despise him as a barking dog, nor consider it sinful so long as thou perceivest such things to be hateful to thee.

10. Once, at least, in the week devoutly and without ostentation communicate. For this Sacrament is the provision for thy journey, the pledge of eternal glory, the reparation of strength, the bread that strengtheneth man's heart, solace for the way, the earnest of thy country. To this have recourse, as to the Tabernacle of God, in difficulties; to a City of refuge in evils, as the hart to the fountain of waters, as the famished man to the Table which Jesus hath prepared with much pains, where the refreshment is His own Blood, and the sincerest love hath provided for thee. There is, moreover, especially one practice which I know not how sufficiently to recommend, which is, that of collecting from all created things incentives, and, as it were, little torches to kindle our love to the Creator; thus aspire thou unto Him, and in every circumstance conform thyself with thy whole heart to His most holy will, so as to seek for nothing else in this world, but that His most holy will may be done in all things.

The same Method converted into Prayer.

1. *O my God, the Fountain of all good, I love Thee with my whole heart, for Thou hast created me for Thyself, that I might serve Thee, and cling with my whole heart to Thee. I pray Thee, good*

Jesu, direct Thou my steps in Thy paths, that this day, with all my thoughts, — with all my words, — and with all my works, — I may always tend to Thee, and at length, O Thou my one and only object of desire, may arrive at Thee. Right intention.

2. *Draw me after Thee, that I may follow Thee, and send forth Thine Angel to guide me in the way; and set spiritual superiors before me, of whom Thou hast said, He that heareth you heareth Me. This I resolve to do, for I am not wiser or better than Thou, O most loving Jesu.* Obedience.

3. *But if any of Thy creatures this day through the gates of my senses appear unto me, grant, I pray Thee, that I may look on them as sent by Thee, and commanded to do good to me, and therefore not unto them but unto Thee do I attribute every good, nor will I love them but on account of Thee. And what is there, indeed, that I can love or seek for beyond Thee? Do I not assuredly know that Thou art the sea of all good, and that from Thee all things flow? But if they endeavour to seduce my heart and to draw it aside to themselves, do Thou assist me that I may hate every created thing as a snare, as poison, as death, and as hell itself, when it is without Thee. I know that the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing; nay, the more any one endeavours to satisfy them, the more insatiable do they become.* The love of God.
Contempt of the creature.

4. *If evils should occur to me, may I embrace them as sent or permitted by Thee with the greatest forethought and the greatest love; may I, Thy servant, acknowledge my cross, and acquiesce in Thy most sacred wisdom and will.* Resignation.

5. *And those men who are my companions in life, and especially my enemies, I will love, for so Thou commandest; and I do love them for Thy sake. Nor will I prefer myself to any one on account of Thy gifts to me, lest those very gifts be taken from me; nor will I desire to be preferred to any one; for since I have nothing of my own, and am able to do nothing without Thee, or gain any thing for myself, I wish not for any thing to be assigned or given to me. Nor do I, who am the very least of all, presume to judge any one; for I know not, whether I myself, alas! be worthy of love or hatred; and I know that so great only is each man as he appeareth in Thine eyes, O most merciful Jesu.* Love of our neighbour.
Contempt of self.

6. *But out of these grant me, I pray Thee, good men for companions, not such as are pestilential in their character, scattering the poison of destruction; not seducers; and that I may be at peace with all men; for, O Thou my rest, the place where Thou dwellest is built in peace; and in peace I long on this day most lovingly to entertain Thee,* Peace to be kept with all.

O Prince of Peace, and most intimately to embrace Thee. For such out of Thine infinite love is Thy command to wretched me.

7. *If I shall fall in the way, wilt Thou not, O Thou my hope, stretch forth Thy right hand to the work of Thine hands? and I, through contrition and love, will forthwith lift up myself unto Thee, lest I be separated from Thee for a moment; and it may be for ever.*

Contrition immediate after sin.

8. *Do Thou, O Jesu, O Jesu, the Keeper of men, so guard the gates of my senses and my tongue, that no one enter thereby unless he be sent by Thee, or be admitted for Thy sake as a messenger from a distant land, from the land of the living, from Thee, O my Father, King of kings, and Lord of lords. For do not all things, if I rightly behold them and hear them, speak to me of Thy greatness? and of what great things Thou hast prepared for me? They announce unto me my vanity and misery, and that Thou art my all and only good.*

Guard the senses.
How the creatures are to be considered.

9. *Finally, grant unto me every day in some measure, by self-examination, to ascertain whether I am proceeding onward and advancing toward Thee, Who art all my good, and for which I long;—whether I am growing in the love of Thee, unto Whom I sigh and hasten,—in hatred of myself and mortification of my senses and will. For this is the sacrifice and burnt-offering of most sweet savour which Thou desirest to receive from me; and I by night and by day with earnest expectation am waiting for Thee alone, that Thou wouldst command me to come unto Thee, and that Thou wouldst come unto me, and refresh one who is weary with the way; O Thou Who art Thyself the rest of the weary; Thou that allayest in the thirsty soul that which nothing else can satisfy; and art most sweet consolation to him that mourneth in banishment! Grant, I entreat Thee, to me who am but as “a dead dog,” or the prodigal son, that I may return to Thee and eat of Thy bread, and of that wine which Thou hast mingled with honey for us in Thy most revered Eucharist, that I may be filled with Thy love, and live and die in Thee, O my Life, my God, my All! O when will it be that Thou wilt remember me? when shall I receive the cup of Salvation? when shall my life be hidden in Thee? when shall I be one with Thee, and live in Thee? when shall all Thy creatures speak only to me of Thy love, and Thy greatness? nay, rather, when shall all things be silent in Thy presence, and Thou Thyself alone wilt talk unto me? O Thou, Who art my Life, when shall I die for Thee? O Thou, the Day that knowest no setting, when wilt Thou arise unto me? when wilt Thou shine forth unto me, O Eternal Light? and when shall I enter into the joy of my Lord;—that I may rejoice not in*

Frequent self-examination.
Preparation for Communion.

the good things that Thou givest, but in Thee, and for Thy sake, Who art all good, and may love Thee with my whole heart and soul?

A SHORT DIARY COMPILED FROM THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

REMEMBER, O my brother, that short is the way and the life thou ledest. That the reward and the prize which is set before thee are eternal. And in order to obtain them, what is it that God requireth of thee? That thou wilt be willing to be saved. For if thou wilt be willing, by His grace thou shalt be able; and shalt keep His commandments, notwithstanding all the allurements of the world and the flesh. For His commands are sweet and not grievous. For tell me, I pray thee, is it difficult to love all good? not to curse and to swear? to attend the Blessed Eucharist on Festival days and Sundays? to be obedient to parents, not to kill, nor commit fornication, nor steal, to slander no one? Is not this a pleasant path, and an easy yoke, and a light burden? And here I will moreover add the description of a pathway which thou mayst observe if it please thee.

A consideration of the Presence of God is certainly alone sufficient in all our actions, especially when kindled from time to time by an Ejaculation, such as *we are about to add, from Thee, and in Thee, &c.*, which may be often repeated with a devout sense and with signing the sign of the Cross; yet for the sake of variety, the following may be added.

In the morning when rising, make the sign of the Cross, and say, *With my soul have I desired Thee in the night, for from Thee and in Thee and for Thee are all things, O my God and my All. I believe in Thee, O my Lord, and in Thee I hope, and with my whole heart I love Thee.*

Observe the Ejaculation, *From Thee, and in Thee, and for Thee, are all things, O my God and my All*;—now this contains in it first of all humiliation of self, for it is a confession that all things are from God; secondly, *in Thee* implies recollection of His Presence; thirdly, *for Thee* expresses pure intention and an act of the love of God; and those words, *I believe in Thee, O my Lord, &c.*, contain an eloquent expression of faith, hope, and charity. And this form may be attached to all the Ejaculations, or may be made use of instead of them.

Or instead of the above, another prayer may be the following.—*O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee. My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth after Thee: in a barren and dry land where no water is. Thus have I looked for Thee in holiness, that I might behold Thy power and glory.* Psalm lxi. 1, 3.

After this, first of all return thanks; secondly, confess thy sins and resolve to avoid them; thirdly, offer up thine actions to the glory of God; and say *The Lord's Prayer* and *The Creed*.

When there is time for meditation or pious reading,—sign thyself with the

sign of the Cross, and say, *The Master is come, and calleth for thee. The Lord God hath opened mine ear; and I am not rebellious, neither turn away back.* And thus offer up thyself to do what thou readest. And add, *From Thee, &c.*, as above; and *I believe in Thee, O my Lord, &c.* John xi. 28; Isaiah l. 5.

When thou art going to the Sacrament, which is the greatest of all things, think that thou art going to Calvary, and say, *I will go and see this great sight; for from Thee, and in Thee, &c.*

When there present first of all think over thy sins, stir up contrition, and renew thy purpose of a good life.

Secondly, offer up unto God all that thou doest on that day.

Thirdly, take care that it is indeed a spiritual Communion unto thee.

On entering thy chamber.—*Oh that I knew where I might find Him alone; for from Thee and in Thee, &c.*

When there is a knock at thy door, stir up an act of love to God and thy neighbour, and say.—*Enter, O Lord, into the soul of thy servant; and then receive thy neighbour as Christ.*

When thou preparest thyself to receive instruction.—*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. As the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress: so our eyes wait upon Thee, O Lord my God.* 1 Sam. iii. 10; Psalm cxxiii. 2.

When about to do any thing, purify thine intention.—*My heart is inditing a good matter, I speak of the things which I have made unto the king; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. For from Thee, &c.* Remember that as the pen cannot write of itself, nor without ink; so neither can we do any thing without God, but only in the Lord Who strengtheneth us.

When thou conversest with thy neighbour in order to gain him to the Lord, say,—*No one can come unto Thee except Thou draw him. Draw us after Thee, we will run after the savour of Thy good ointments.* John vi. 44; Cant. i. 3.

When thou approachest thy spiritual superior, in him set God before thee.—*He that heareth you heareth me. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. For from Thee, &c.* Luke x. 16; 1 Sam. iii. 9.

When thou eatest, acknowledge the Giver, and thankfully say,—*O God Who feedest me from my youth up, even in mine old age and when I am grey-headed Thou wilt not forsake me. Thou openest Thine hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness; for from Thee, and in Thee, and for Thee, are all things.* Psalm lxxi. 16; cxlv. 16.

When thou drinkest, stir up some action of love.—*My soul is a-thirst for God, the living Fountain. Come ye and drink of the wine that I have mingled. He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst. For from Thee, &c.* Psalm xlii. 2; Prov. ix. 5; John iv. 14.

When thou studiest, since no knowledge is profitable, but to know God and His will, say,—*Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God.* Psalm cxliii. 10.

When thou playest.—*If I do not remember Thee let my tongue cleave unto the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not Thee in my mirth.* Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

When thou walkest.—*If I climb up into heaven Thou art there; if I go*

down into hell Thou art there also. I have set God always before me. For from Him, &c. Psalm cxxxix. 7 ; xvi. 9.

When thou seest things beautiful.—*Behold, Thou art fair, my beloved. For from Thee, &c. Cant. i. 16.*

When thou seest good being done.—*From Thee, O Lord, and in Thee, and for Thee, are all things, O my God, my All. I believe in Thee, O Lord, &c.*

When thou doest alms.—*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me. For from Thee, &c. Matt. xxv. 40.*

When thou hearest and seest evil.—*Is there evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it? This is the will of God, even your sanctification. For from Thee, &c. Amos iii. 6 ; 1 Thess. iv. 3.*

When thou sufferest any thing.—*The Lord killeth and maketh alive. Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? Ought not Christ to have suffered, and then to enter into His glory? For from Thee, &c. 1 Sam. ii. 6 ; Job ii. 10.*

If thou hast done any good.—*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth. Thou, O Lord, workest all our works in us. For from Thee, &c. 1 Pet. iv. 11 ; Phil. ii. 13.*

When thou desirest any thing, see the vanity of all things, and say,—*Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh ; so shalt Thou make their image to vanish out of the city. Psalm lxxiii. 19.*

When thou fearest any thing, lift up thine eyes to God, and say,—*Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain. Ps. xxxix. 7. For either that which thou fearest will take place, in which case sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof : or it will not, and thy disquietude is for no purpose.*

Against the desire of pleasing men.—*If I pleased men I should not be a servant of Christ. Thou only art the Lord, Thou only art Most High. Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? I believe in Thee, &c. Gal. i. 10 ; James iv. 4.*

Against pride.—*Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased. For from Thee, &c. Luke xiv. 11.*

Against covetousness.—*It is more blessed to give than to receive. Take no thought what ye shall eat, for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. For from Thee, &c. Aots xx. 35 ; Matt. vi. 31.*

Against luxury.—*That which delighteth is but for a moment ; the torment that remaineth is eternal. I believe in Thee, &c.*

Against envy.—*He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. I believe in Thee, &c. 1 John iii. 14.*

Against gluttony.—*The kingdom of God is not meat and drink. I believe in Thee, &c. Rom. xiv. 17.*

Against anger.—*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. I believe in Thee, &c.*

Against lukewarmness.—*Cursed be he that doeth the work of God negligently. For from Thee, &c. Jer. xlviii. 10.*

In temptation.—*Thou provest me, O Lord, whether I love Thee : and Thou*

wilt not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able. Lo, I behold that without Thy grace I should despise Thee the greatest Good for the sake of the greatest evil, and that I might please a most deadly enemy : that I should suffer for ever for a momentary pleasure. But I have sworn and steadfastly purposed to keep Thy righteous judgments. Behold, fire and water is set before me ; I must adhere to Thee, O my God, or to the devil : I must for ever mourn or be glad, must live or die. For whom shall I live but for Thee, Who out of love for me hast endured to die ? From Thee, &c. Deut. xiii. 3 ; Psalm cxix. 106 ; Eccclus. xv. 16.

When thou art praised.—*Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy Name give the praise. Psalm cxv. 1.*

If thy mind is disposed to rest in any thing, say then,—*What have I in Heaven but Thee ; and what have I desired on earth but Thee ? Let every one that thirsteth come unto Me and drink. For from Thee, &c. Psalm lxxiii. 25 ; John vii. 37.*

When thou hast good success.—*To God alone be honour and glory. For from Thee, and in Thee, and for Thee, are all things, O my God and my All. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy Name. 1 Tim. i. 17 ; Psalm ciii. 1.*

In the evening examine thy conscience, and when thou art about to lie down in bed, 1. give thanks ; 2. ask for grace to know and hate thy sins ; 3. search thy heart ; 4. stir up contrition ; 5. resolve on amendment ; and say,—*Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit : while thou reflectest that perhaps it may be thy last night, and enquirest of thyself whether thou art prepared to die. And stir up some act of love.*

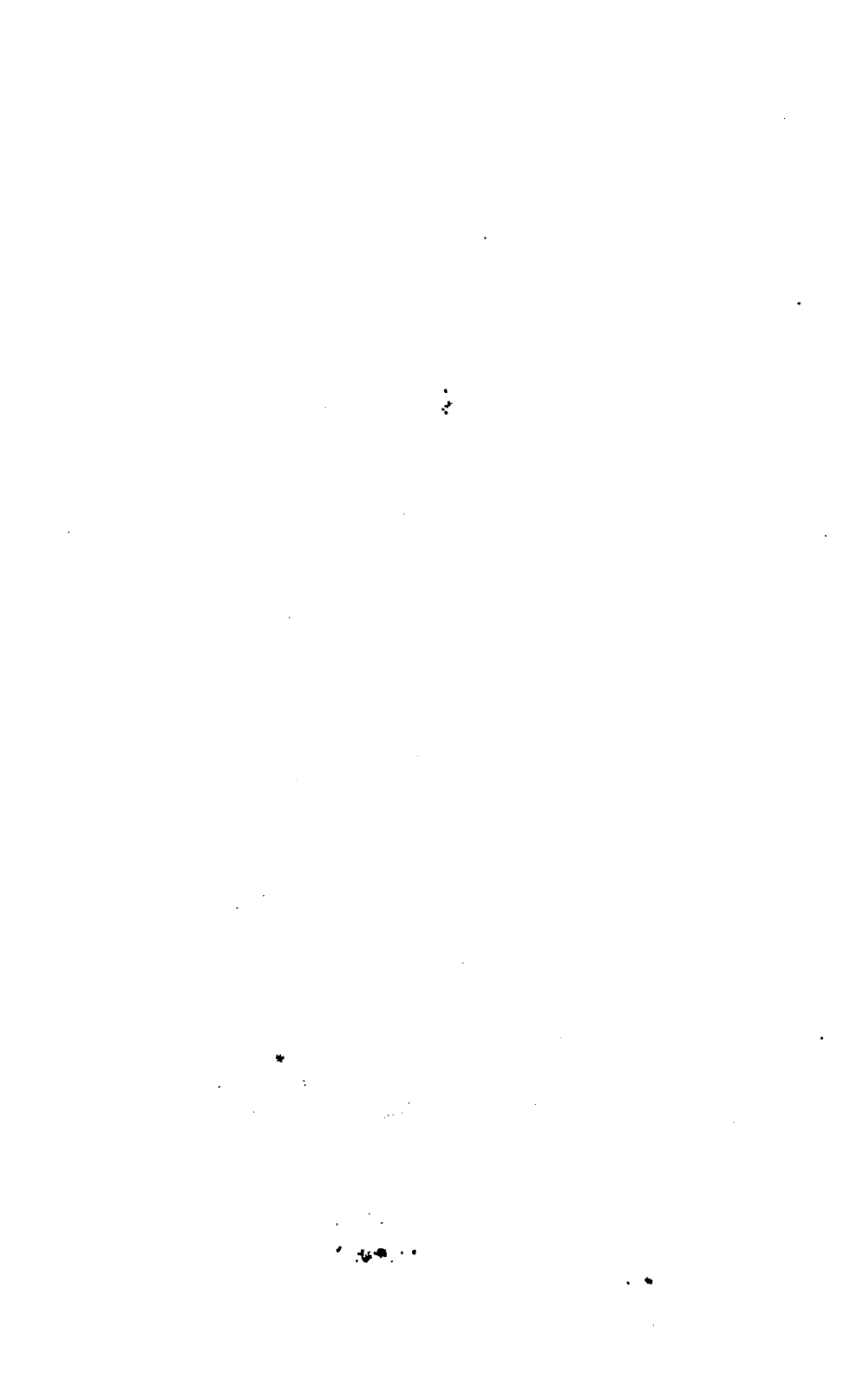




IMAGE THE FOURTH.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, AS A FAITHFUL SOLDIER OF CHRIST.

Although thou mayst have been converted unto God, and hast gone forth from the bondage of sin, yet never think thyself secure. For our life upon earth is a trial and a warfare. How shalt thou be able to endure? Consider that thou art standing, as it were, between Christ (A), thy Lord and Saviour, and the devil (B), thy deadly enemy. He is striving to win thee back to sin and eternal perdition; and is suggesting to thee how the World (C) inviteth thee, by setting pleasure before thee, and vanities (D), by which Sin (E) allureth thee unto her. But, behold, Christ crieth aloud unto thee; His wounds, and the sufferings which for thy sake He endured cry to thee! Think upon those rewards of virtue which are above, and how momentary are the pleasures of sin, and everlasting her pains behind. Consider to which of these thou wouldst prefer to adhere. Is it not to God, the greatest and best of friends? Abhor, therefore, the treacherous foe. Behold the children of Israel (F) of old; how by a similar deceit, through the lust of the flesh, he endeavoured to bring them back again into Egypt (G). Thus now also Gluttony (H) and Avarice (I) are endeavouring to draw back those who are advancing on their way to Heaven; or, when they are already approaching to the Heavenly goal, Vain-glory (K) labours to hurl them headlong down. "He who endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved."

On Spiritual Progress,

AND ITS HINDRANCES OR TEMPTATIONS.

AFTER the soul,—which had wandered from its end and aim, from God most great and good, and His most holy law,—hath returned into the good way, it is like the children of Israel, whom with a strong hand and high arm the Lord delivered from the yoke of Pharaoh and their Egyptian bondage. Therefore, as they remained not still in the land of their captivity, but with Moses for their guide went forward through the wilderness to the Holy Land, so also must we do. Yet as it happened to the Israelites to be tried by their enemies pursuing them, and by hardships in the wilderness, so will the soul too now begin to be tempted to return. What then must we do? Confirm and stir up our courage by serious deliberation respecting our future progress, despising the weapons and power of the enemy; since the Lord fighteth for us^a, and will not suffer our enemies to hurt us, though they be near, if we be followers of that which is good; but He will cover us with the Cloud of His mercy, and will set it between us and our enemies; though it may be in the night of temptation, terrors and fears shall not be wanting.

But in order that the method of deliberation,—which we have sometimes used already, and which we shall often have to make use of in our progress,—may be thoroughly understood, it seems advisable to subjoin a short account of it here, though it will be found afterwards more fully set forth in laying down a method of meditation. For as often as in our spiritual journey any doubt arises in dealing with human affairs, this method will be of avail to draw forth the most advisable counsel, to confirm the wavering, and to guide the doubtful.

OF THE METHOD TO BE USED IN DELIBERATION.

BEFORE entering upon deliberation mind to place thyself in the presence of God, most Good and Great, and humbly importune Him for light and grace, to understand His most holy will; since He alone knows what is best for us. This done, first bring

What must
be done pre-
vious to de-
liberation.

^a Exod. xiv. 14.

forward the matter to be considered ; for example,—concerning a state of life ; concerning progress in the path of virtue ; respecting a large household ; whether an office or a benefice is to be accepted or refused ; and so of other things, whether, and how, and when, they are either to be done or left undone. Secondly, above all things, renew thy affections towards God, so as, if possible, to be inclined neither way : for when the mind is like a balance at equilibrium, a slight preponderance will turn it this way or that, and it will readily apprehend significations, on either side, of the Divine will. Next, weigh well, whether upon duly considering the end of thy creation, this or that side of the question,—whether, that is, the acceptance or refusal of an office, this or that state of life, one or other way of behaving, employment, exercise, proceeding,—best conduces to attaining that purposed end—has greater or less inconvenience in regard to it ; or otherwise. For we ought most or least to affect an object, according as it is most or least conducive to the attainment of eternal life, and the fulfilment of the Divine will ; and having thus duly weighed the matter in hand, and either side of it, we must pass judgment on it, as in God's presence, and in His light, bringing it before the eyes of the Divine majesty ; and here we must observe those motions, and that repose of mind, by which the Lord is wont to make known His will to those, who with a sincere and resigned heart desire to ascertain it. This method will commonly suffice in order to make thy choice, and to conclude thy deliberations. For as in meditation one or two considerations very commonly so move our affections, by God's grace assisting, that there is no need to seek for other aids ; so is it likewise in choice or deliberation, in which no less are the inspirations and motions of the Holy Spirit to be noted and observed.

If, however, the points above-mentioned should not be sufficient to confirm thy will in that which is good, then thou must further go on as in meditation, as will hereafter be fully explained ; for instance, to consider carefully what you would recommend before God to your friend, and what illustration you would use, to persuade him to that which you judge to be best. For we find it naturally to be the case, that we are apt to give others better counsels than we follow ourselves.

Thence proceed to consider further, what you will wish you had chosen, when you come to die ; and know, that it is that which you *should* choose now ; note in like manner what counsel you will wish to have gone by, when you come to be set before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge ; and, which will stimulate the mind still more effectually, think on eternity ; remember that

What in the act of deliberation.

Firstly.

Secondly.

Thirdly.

The course to be taken, should the foregoing method not answer our wishes.

Other considerations.

First.

Second.

Third.

Fourth. what you have once chosen is eternal: for that which is once done cannot be undone. If moreover you look to what the Saints have done, or would do, in the matter in hand, and, as it were, call them into counsel, they will shine out like stars upon thee, when thus bewildered with Fifth. darkness and perplexity of deliberation. See, in like manner, which side of the question will procure thee most peace and Sixth. quietness and joy of soul. But much more will it profit thee, humbly to enquire from Christ the Lord, the Angel of great counsel^b, what in life and in words He hath advised or might advise thee,—of Him, I say, the mouth of the Lord, and the Ark of the testimony, the Eternal Wisdom, the Master and Shepherd of our souls. And if, peradventure, the better course should attract thee less, because it is the more difficult; then, lo! surely the remembrance of His benefits, with which He prevents us, and invites us to follow His most holy counsels, should lend a spur to thy deliberations.

But if the mind has not yet strength to perceive and embrace the truth, then must we see what and whence the hindrance is; and that To see what keeps us back. discovered, choose the most excellent way, and so at length offer it as an whole burnt-offering unto the Divine Majesty, and then give thanks to Him for the knowledge and will vouchsafed thee.

This method have I drawn out in the chief duties of a godly life. First, that it may serve thee as a pattern, O reader, in every deliberation: next, that after, upon deliberation made, thou hast formed any godly resolution, thou mayst be able, by recurring to these points, to strengthen thyself therein. For certain is it, that all who have chosen, upon How the mind may be confirmed, and recalled to its first warmth. mature deliberation, either to devote themselves to a religious life, or any other godly course of living, are yet liable to flag, from the infirmity of our nature; and that at such times it is highly profitable, in order to their renewal, to go over their steps again, and the reasons which led them piously to embrace that resolve. For the course so much in esteem as to a religious life, and recommended for spiritual renewal, is that of calling up in remembrance the day on which each went forth from the land of Egypt, the disposition of mind, and motives by which he was then influenced; and the same is of like avail in respect to all exercises of piety deliberately undertaken. Here, however, you have various considerations given, which, it is my most earnest prayer that the Divine grace may prosper to the edification of all men.

But take notice how, in every deliberation, the mind is swayed this way and that by different impulses and spirits; and therefore it much imports thee, yea, rather is absolutely necessary, that thou shouldst

^b Isaiah ix. 6. Wonderful, Counsellor. See LXX.

discern the spirits, that so the will of God, being more thoroughly sounded, we may be the more diligent to perform it. Wherefore thou shalt find here subjoined considerations on the marks by which to discern spirits.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MARKS TO DISCERN SPIRITS BY.

Guardian Angel.—Seest thou the great perils that beset thy path of life, its many precipices, its many labyrinths, and yet delayest both to seek and follow a guide? Knowest thou not how ^{Dangers of the world.} many will offer to be the companions of thy way, friends in seeming, but in very truth, deadly enemies? See then how diligently thou must mark and try out the spirits, whether they be of God, since the devil also transforms himself into an angel of light.

Christian.—This one terror often fills me with anxiety, and I often feel myself standing at some crossway where many diverse paths, some safe, some most dangerous, branch out, whilst in this alone are all alike, that from them all there is no return. O mine Angel, the guide of my life, thou knowest both my path and mine own blindness, and I know well that after thy charity thou desirest above all ^{To follow guidance.} things, that, as Raphael of old, thou mayst lead me to a wished-for union with my Lord, and to the house of the Lord our God^c. How shall I then congratulate myself, what thanks shall I not render unto thee, spirit most pure? how shall I not embrace thee, when I shall have traversed at length this mighty ocean, and have escaped shipwreck, and held a straight course of life, in the midst of so ^{The Saints' joy over perils escaped.} many spirits, evil and good, like contrary winds? O most merciful Jesu, Who vouchsafest to be to me both Guide and Way, and to assign me this Angel to accompany me and lead me to Thee, suffer not him to be frustrated of his hope, or me of my salvation, and let me not be led by any spirit but Thine, for I know and am well assured that he who hath not Thy Spirit, O Christ Jesu, is none of Thine.

Christ the Lord.—See how many falsehoods and deceits lie every where in ambush for thee, so that thou mayst not lean on ^{Deceitfulness of the world.} thine own understanding. How many are the sects of the heathen! Number them if thou canst. How many the heads of heresy and her wanderings, which lead so many souls into error and destruction! And indeed, what is the life of the ungodly but to wander in their way, whereof too late they bewail themselves in hell, saying, Therefore

^c Tobit v. 4, &c.

have we erred, yea, we have gone through deserts where there lay no way, but the way of the Lord we have not known it^d.

Christian.—Truly there is nothing, O my Saviour, which fills me with greater dread than that I both hear and see even the cedars of Libanus to have fallen^e, Origens, Lucifers, Tertullians, and, as if misled by some Will o' the Wisp, to have arrived at length at the bogs of carnality, or the precipices of presumption. I give thanks unto Thee, that Thou hast preserved me even until now, and since I know not what the late evening may bring, and do know mine own feebleness, I cast all my thoughts upon Thee, O Lord, and trust that Thou wilt lead me, and wilt not despise me.

Christ.—Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, for ye wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, the rulers of this darkness of the world, who, exercised to combat through so many thousands of years, are continually on the watch to overcome the incautious.

Christian.—Alas, Lord! who shall resist this great company^f, and so many roaring lions ready to devour? yet if Thou, God, be for us, who shall be against us? And by Thy servant Antony and other Thy champions, have I learnt how timorous they be, when their might is broken by Thy Cross;—that they yield like women when they find themselves met manfully;—how weak boys and feeble maidens have triumphed over them when they fought in Thy Name. Therefore with Thy Prophet, and relying on Thy grace, I say, though an host shall arise against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid^g.

Christ.—There is no better armour than the shield of faith with which ye are able to quench all the fiery darts^h of that most wicked enemy, none better than trust in Me and distrust of self. Therefore the righteous will be bold as a lion, and free from fearⁱ. But see that thou often search out the citadel of thy soul, as thine enemy also doth; and where it is weakest there be most diligent to fortify it, there keep thy watch. Remember that while the enemy is still without the walls he may easily be resisted; not so when he hath once entered. Dash, therefore, thy little ones against the stones, kill even in the seed thy evil thoughts. I have said, Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing; and observe that the fiend will often wait on thy humours, with good thoughts at first, and then, when off thy guard, will be leading thee astray. Therefore search out earnestly where such and such thoughts will lead you.

Watchful-
ness of the
evil spirits.

Their num-
ber.

Their feeble-
ness.

Faith a
shield.

The begin-
nings of sin to
be resisted.

^d Wisdom v. 6, 7.

^f 2 Chron. xx. 12, 15.

^h Eph. vi. 16.

^e Isaiah ii. 13.

^g Psalm xxvii. 3.

ⁱ Prov. xxiii. 1.

Christian.—I give Thee thanks, O my God, Thou true Light which hast enlightened me^k, that I might see the desires of earthly things to be snares; and whatever tendeth to ambition, or the love of money, or sensual pleasure, however tempting to the flesh, to be the soul's poison, which the enemy proffers us to drink. So enlighten mine eyes always, I beseech Thee, that I sleep not in death^l, lest at any time mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him.

Earthly desires are snares.

Christ the Lord.—Else, as Pharaoh the Israelites with service in mortar and brick^m, he troubles you with difficulties and scruples, that he may hinder you in your journey onward to the Holy Land, and to the high summits of perfection; for with gloom and sadness he is intimately acquainted: and condemned to them himself in hell, he would fain surround you with them. Yet think not that sense is to be listened to when it murmurs at mortifications proposed to it, but know that a man's foes are they of his own householdⁿ.

How the devil troubles good people.

Lastly, take My life and doctrine for touchstones. Yet on this subject also be on thy guard; do not attempt, at times when the enemy hath spread darkness around,—when it is night, and thou art set amongst snares and precipices,—at such times, I say, be not over anxious either to recede or advance, but stand still as in a dark place, till the day break and the shadows flee away. Cast anchor in such times, as in a dark storm^o. Call also into counsel thy spiritual Father, and whosoever shall suggest that thou shouldst hide thy thoughts, let him be the messenger of the Prince of Darkness in thy sight; for he hateth the light, and, as he is the father of lies, hateth the truth also. Therefore open thyself to thy Father, as a chaste maid might lay open the arts of an impure lover to her parent: and I will not leave thee nor forsake thee.

To consider Christ's life.

Season of temptation not a time for changing our mode of life.

Consult a spiritual adviser.

Christian.—I know, O Lord, that as befel Antony in his conflict, Thou art ever by us, as a general in the field of battle, and lookest on us in our contests. And this lends me great confidence, this and the knowledge that the enemy cannot tempt us, except Thou, the Father of mercies, givest leave. So we read that he asked leave to be able to tempt Job, and desired that he might sift Peter as wheat; but Thou art faithful, O Lord, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. This hope is laid up in my bosom.

The enemy can do nothing unless God permit.

Christ.—If for a little while I forsake thee, then see that thy courage and fidelity appear, as in times of adversity appear the sloth and drowsiness of the wicked; shake off these, which are often a source of tempta-

^k John i. 9.

^l Psalm xiii. 3, 4.

^m Exod. i. 14.

ⁿ Matt. x. 36.

^o Cant. ii. 17.

Temptation, why permitted by God. tion to thee, and humble thyself mightily in My sight ; for it is to teach thee thine own feebleness, or that thou mayst shake off a drowsy spirit, or mayst honour Me by thy patience, as Tobias did and Job, that I suffer thee to be tempted, giving thee strength withal to overcome.

Christian.—O God, most gracious, truly according to the multitude of my sorrows Thy comforts have refreshed my soul ; and if we be righteous men, as was the case in all Thy life, and in the lives of Thy Saints, Thou wilt so mingle sorrow with gladness as to weave our web of life in strange and sweet variety.

Christ.—With this hope lift up thy mind, being assured that infinite goodness and wisdom will do all things in weight, in number and measure ; let this be thy consolation ; and reject every other consolation which draweth not unto Me, and every light which tendeth not unto Me. And whatsoever disturbeth thy peace of mind, know that such cometh not from Me, Who am the Prince of Peace. Joy and peace in the Holy Ghost, by which thou art lifted up above earthly things, and a mind weaned from them, these are the notes of My loving-kindness. And whilst thou enjoyest tranquillity and peace, prepare thy mind for tempest and war. While the light continueth, look forward to the way thou must go when the cloud shall have come over thee.

The life of good men varies with griefs and gladness.

The remedy of temptation is hope.

The sign of a good spirit is peace.

A Prayer,

OR PROFESSION OF FOLLOWING THE GUIDANCE OF THE GOOD SPIRIT.

Come, Holy Spirit, and send forth from Heaven a ray of Thy light : come, Father of the poor, come Light of hearts ; arise Thou Day-spring, and scatter my darkness, lest at any time my enemy say, I have prevailed against him. O kindly Light, how shall I not rather love Thee, than mine own darkness, yea rather than the prince of this darkness^p ? for except Thou shouldst shine upon me, my soul would well-nigh dwell in hell^a : except Thou shouldst scatter the cloud of vanity, how can I hold a straight course in the mighty ocean of this life ? Neither shall I be able, except Thou, the Hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea, shouldst disclose Thyself unto me, and shew me the way. Behold, how many wretched souls the quicksands, and the whirlpools which are of hell engulf ! Behold how many heathen, deceived by errors and a false show of good, depart, alas ! into outer darkness, because Thou the Sun of Righteousness hast not shined upon them ! but to me

If God shine not we are in darkness.

^p John iii. 19.

^a Psalm xciv. 17. Vulgate.

have Thy compassion and kindness in truth, in very truth, appeared, that denying ungodly and worldly lusts, I might live soberly, righteously, and godly unto Thee;—might follow Thee, O my Life, and might mount up above the heights of the earth; that so the net may be spread in vain in the sight of that which hath wings^r. For what greater compassion can appear, than that Thou, being God, shouldst be made Man? What greater kindness, than that Thou shouldst come to be Guest in my unclean heart? not to be fed Thyself, Who art fed amongst the lilies^s, on the bread of Angels, but to be made food for me, a wayfarer,—that I may live soberly, as full drunken with this excellent Cup,—and righteously, as cleansed with Thy blood,—and godly, as wounded with the love of Thee. Come therefore, and behold, and perfect this vineyard, this will of mine, which Thy right hand hath planted^t. O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest^u? For my soul, as a sparrow, hath found her an house, and, as a turtle dove, a nest, where she may lay her young, even Thy altars, O Lord of Hosts. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee; for in such there is always a sacrifice that pleaseth Thee,—a troubled spirit, a broken and humbled heart, the groaning of a soul that seeketh Thee,—yea rather it is the moaning to Thee of Thine own elect and beautiful Dove^x.

Thanks-giving.

Application to the Communion.

Forbid it, then, that thenceforth I should turn mine eyes down to the earth. For when I shall see my thoughts incline to earthly, to perishable things, will it not be plain, that this wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish? for the wisdom which is from above,—from Thee, O God, Light unchangeable, and Fountain of all goodness,—calls us from earthly things to heavenly, from the creature to the Creator, from things transitory to things eternal. In these the soul is enlarged, and tastes how gracious Thou art, O Sweetness ineffable; in those it is darkened, and is filled with bitterness, and can find no rest; for there is no rest for it but in Thee. Vouchsafe therefore, O Lord, to prevent me in all my doings; make every thought and work begin, continue, and end in Thee; and though hosts arise against me, yet let not my heart be afraid, for do I not know of a surety that Thou wilt not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able, neither leave me without witness? Yea, Thou shalt go before my face, and shalt shew me the way wherein I should walk. Unto Thee do I lift up my soul, in Thee, my God, I have put my trust, let me not be ashamed, neither let mine enemies laugh me to scorn: for all that wait patiently on Thee shall not be ashamed, but shall praise Thee unto ages of ages, and shall bless Thy name for ever and ever. Amen.

^r Prov. i. 17. Marg. Reading.

^s Psalm lxxx. 14, 15.

^x Cant. ii. 14.

^t Cant. vi. 3.

^u Psalm lxxxiv. 3. Lat. Version.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN DELIBERATION.

CONSIDER with thyself, the origin of thy thoughts, and the end they tend to, be it ever so remote; and mark well if thou art resigned and peaceful, for this is the surest mark of God's presence, for in peace is His tabernacle. Of a surety he shall derive the greatest light whosoever shall take Christ Jesus our Lord for his most bright pole-star, or cynosure, and heavenly guide of his doings, and shall so search out the end of all his thoughts, words, and actions, and see thereby how much it declines from purity of intention.

Impartiality in deliberation most necessary.

See whither thy thoughts tend.

Secondly, seek counsel of others; no one is his own best physician or counsellor; and when the Spirit warns us not to lean to our own understanding, if we obey Him not, He will confound the wisdom of the wise, but the meek and gentle doth He teach His ways.

We must go by others' counsel in our own matters.

Thirdly, go to the most Holy Sacrament, and by these means consult as it were at the mouth of God, concerning the good way.

Fourthly, it will conduce to resignation, if by chance you should be inclined to either of two sides, by some particular holy exercise or prayer, to settle impartially, and balance the will. In matters of less moment, it is not without example to open the Gospel, or some other pious book, and so to explore the Divine will.

Another mode of deliberating.

But in such a case, of very great avail is the advice of a Confessor or some holy man, which advice you may purpose yourself to follow after various prayers, in which you have asked God for illumination for him and for yourself.

Ejaculations,

BY WHICH THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SOUGHT FOR.

"Shew me Thy ways, O Lord: and teach me Thy paths." Psalm xxv. 3.

"Shew Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Psalm cxliii. 8.

"Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God." Psalm cxliii. 10.

"Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm li. 10.

"Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart, prove me and examine my thoughts." Psalm cxxxix. 23.

"Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein is my desire." Psalm cxix. 35.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6.

"Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour, and further us with Thy continual help; that all our prayers and all our works may be begun and ended in Thee." Collect.

† Psalm lxxvi. 2. Vulg. For "At Salem is His Tabernacle."

Deliberation

ON THE STUDY OF PERFECTION OR DAILY ADVANCEMENT, AFTER ANY
ONE HATH RETURNED INTO THE WAY.

Christian.—O eternal Wisdom, Christ Jesu, my Salvation, my Guide, and most sweet Refuge, Thou hast brought me into being, Thou hast placed me in this way, and hast shewed me abundance of good things which Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee. And behold, zealous of true perfection, my mind burns, sighs, and oftentimes groans deeply amidst the dangers and diversities of the ways that lie before me. Shew me, I pray thee, good Jesu, the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee. Teach me in what perfection truly consisteth, and the blessedness both of this life and of that which is to come. For like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God.

Christ.—The broad and spacious road which thou seekest is charity, concerning which I have given the first and great commandment, saying, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth all the Law and the Prophets; for the fulfilment of the Law is love. But this love and perfection appeareth in this, that men should in every thing have but one will with Me, and the same aversions. Perfection consisteth in love. From which it follows that they should be almost always thinking and speaking of Me; should desire nothing but that My will should be done, and that they might imitate Me, Who have set them the example of all perfection. These, in the greatest peace and tranquility, commit themselves unto My providence, and consider all My judgments as just, and which in themselves are said to be The peace of the perfect. justified*. Such persons are never complaining, never sad, always rejoicing in Me their Lord.

Christian.—But perfection is an arduous matter, requiring great labour, and long time; who, O Lord Jesus, shall be able to attain unto it?

Christ.—My son, if thou wilt take but a little pains in sincere mortifi-

* Psalm xix. 9. Lat. Ver.

cation and prayer; not such sweat and toil as the children of this world take; but even a sixth part; thou mayst certainly be numbered amongst My perfect ones. "I have had but little labour," saith my Ecclesiasticus^a, "and have gotten unto me much rest." And if thou wilt but strenuously press forward, without turning either to the right hand or to the left, in a short space of time I will lead thee unto perfection; as in a short time I have advanced many, even young men and women, unto the sincere perfection of charity. For of them it is truly said, that "being made perfect in a short time, they fulfilled a long time^b." Art thou willing to imitate these?

Christian.—Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God.

Christ.—Hear My words, for they are spirit and they are life^c. And blessed wilt thou be if thou wilt hear Me, and walk in My precepts. Behold, thou knowest the goal that is set before thee; for ye all run in the race, but one receiveth the prize^d. Ye are all followers, but one beareth off the palm; all are My disciples, but one shall be accepted. And who is he? who but that man who doeth all his works in perfection, overcometh himself, and governeth his own spirit? For he, as one on a journey, keepeth the straight path; while another, by crooked ways, scarce even at last shall arrive at the goal. What advice wouldst thou

thyself give a friend; if he had the choice of a road, a house, All works to be done in perfection. a wife, a field, gardens, food, or drink, and could have what is perfect, good, wouldst thou advise him to choose the worse? whether it be a road, a house, or clothing, when he could have all things perfect, shall he take to himself what is imperfect? And consider, I pray thee, dost not thou thyself in all things choose that which is best and perfect, excepting in the case of thy soul, and art desirous that all things should be most excellent, excepting thyself?

Christian.—Would indeed, O Lord, that men were wise; that they would understand and consider their latter end! But, O good God, how great is this the folly of man! For if his soul were but good, all things else would be good to him: but if he were to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, what would it profit him! For as to those that love Thee, all things work together for good; so likewise in truth to them that love Thee not and are evil, all things work together for ill.

Christ.—And what, I pray you, is the reason of this, that with regard to all other matters,—as to living comfortably, and being in health, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to travel, to converse, to work, to paint, to play,—with regard to any of these things,

Perfection of life to be sought for.

^a Eccles. li. 27.

^c John vi. 63.

^b Wisdom iv. 13.

^d 1 Cor. ix. 24.

thou neglectest them not, when in thy power; but when thou canst lead a good life, and pray, and please Me, thou esteemest this of no account? whom dost thou hate in thus doing? Me, or thyself? for whose sake is all this? for Mine, or for thine own enemy? Consult thyself, make thyself the judge and arbiter. How great, thinkest thou, will be the sorrow which will assail him when he shall have come to the close of this life, who now sleeps over and has no care for his spiritual advancement and salvation; the only thing which in fact he ought to be engaged about? And the more grievous will be his self-condemnation, that he now diligently attends to the attainment of all other things but his own salvation.

Christian.—What at that time shall conscience answer to wretched me? Shall I not blush to have lived, and yet scarcely at all to have advanced? For the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day^e. Yea, indeed, perhaps my last works shall be worse than the former.

Growth in
perfection
needful.

Christ.—Doth not that full often happen that a man when he first setteth hand to the plough hath been earnest and active, and afterwards hath been looking back, and is turned away from Me? O how rare a prodigy is it to find one who retaineth that spirit which he had at the beginning of his conversion, and increaseth in the same even unto the day of My coming!

Christian.—Ah, Lord, what shall we have to say in that judgment, if the longer time we have been in the school of perfection and virtue, and the more often we have frequented the Sacraments, we shall be found at last to be so much the more imperfect, to have been so much the less zealous of mortification, humility, and resignation? Then will appear in the face of the whole world the industry of the few who now are singular, and he who hath been wise in his own eyes shall be confounded, and seem to be a fool. Oh, how deeply then will groan Thy lukewarm and indolent disciples, whom Thou, by so many examples, hast instructed to be meek and lowly in heart! For then before the whole world will he be greatly ashamed, that he hath despised the following of Thee, his Master and Guide.

Christ.—But then shall the Saints rejoice, who here with so much pains have followed after perfection, that is to say, after blessedness; have followed it so earnestly as that they have denied parents and children and their own life also, that they might not turn aside from that which they judged to belong unto perfection; but ever aimed at that which might tend to My greater glory, and that which might better please Me. Yea, My servant Teresa even bound herself by a vow, that she would always do that which she judged to be

Fervor of
Saints.

^e Prov. iv. 18.

the most perfect. These are my true children, whose meat it is, and all their delight, to do the will of My Father and Mine. There is no contest among them but for humility, abstinence, charity, and the like. How

beautiful the struggle! how glorious the victory! Certainly, he is by no means a good man who does not wish to be better, and when you begin to cease desiring to be better, you then

cease to be good; for "he that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster^f." How highly displeasing unto Me such as these are I have testified through My Apostle, saying, "I would thou wert

cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth^g." Weigh, therefore, these My words, and consider how pleasing a spectacle it is to Me, and to My assemblies in Heaven, to behold My earnest and strenuous soldier contending like David with Goliath, or one running in the race and leaving the other far behind him.

Christian.—Yea, indeed, in such souls Thou delightest, O my God, and in the way of Thy commandments they run, because Thou hast enlarged their heart. They mount up with wings as eagles; they run

and are not weary^h: for vices are never without punishment, virtues are never without reward, and things that are excellent have in themselves their own reward. For as, O Lord, those that

had been with Thee for three days Thou didst feed in the wilderness, and didst sustain the children of Israel with the heavenly manna which

had in itself all delight; so Thou fillest with consolations Thy fervent Saints; sweetest waters issue to them from the rock of mortification; and the bitter fountains, through the wood of the Cross, are rendered pleasant. And in truth hast Thou not enjoined us,

saying, Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect? And through Thy Apostle Peter hast Thou not warned us thus, "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holyⁱ?" And again, through James Thou

commandest that Thy servants be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing^k." What shall I say in answer to this, who am so lukewarm and indolent? Do I believe that these are Thy commands, and that Thy commands are not grievous? Do I not know that perfection containeth all blessedness, both of this life and of that which is eternal?

Christ.—All these things are often spoken of; how short life is, and the time of contest, how great the rewards which I have prepared for them that love Me. Consider the particular benefits which I have conferred on thee. Those that loved Me

Life and labour is short, but eternal the reward. — which I have conferred on thee. Those that loved Me

^f Prov. xviii. 9.

^g Rev. iii. 16.

^h Isaiah xl. 31.

ⁱ 1 Peter i. 15.

^k James i. 4.

have been so aroused by a sense of these things, that they could never rest, without striving with all their might to please Me in all ways that they possibly could.

Christian.—And what, O my God, shall I render unto Thee for all the benefits Thou hast done unto Me? Would that I could find such grace in Thine eyes, that whatsoever I shall know to be pleasing unto Thy Divine Majesty, I may altogether desire it by Thy grace, and may promptly fulfil the same!

Christ.—Imagine to thyself two sons of a king, and that one of them omits to do nothing which the king forbids, and affords him vexation, unless he has been prohibited under pain of death; but that the other fails not to observe the very slightest wish he has expressed: do not you think that these must occupy a very different place in his regards? which do you suppose the king must most love? Now think over with thyself and ascertain which of these thou thyself resemblest, think how base it is for the sake of some vile pleasure to desert the path of perfection, that is to say, thy chief happiness and joy both now and hereafter. For I call thee not to uncleanness but unto holiness, that ye may taste and see how sweet the Lord is unto them that love Him; how great “the multitude of peace” and sweetness which I have prepared for them. Let My Saints speak and tell thee how great things I have done for them; how sweet it hath been to them to have left the gall and wormwood of the world, and to taste the rivers of pleasure with which they are now filled in the house of My Father. But not on this account alone did they think it good to cling to Me, but full of the light of charity, they saw how right it was to serve Me with a perfect heart, and felt ashamed if they ever perceived more active and better service done for the devil than for Me. O how did My love urge them forward! they took no rest, sleep fled from their eyes, they walked carefully before Me in order that they might please Me alone; they went from strength to strength; their path increased as a shining light, and when they had done all, they said, “We are unprofitable servants, we have only done that which it was our duty to do, and we have left undone things without number which we ought to have done for Thee, O Lord our God, and King of kings.”

Christian.—Thine eyes beheld my substance, yet being imperfect; stretch forth Thy right hand, O Lord, I pray Thee, to the work of Thine hands, and accept this my desire; for I desire to love Thee with my whole heart, and to obey all Thy sacred inspirations and Thy counsels. Accept this my desire, and let it arise like incense in Thy sight. This evening sacrifice of my supplication despise not Thou, late though it be, out of Thine infinite mercy. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive praise

and glory, and honour, from me Thy creature. Thou art worthy that at Thy name every knee should bow, and that all should serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!

Exercise for the Study of Perfection.

Christ. *Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one; and come away. O My dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs¹.*

The Soul. *I have heard, most sweet Jesu, Thy voice; in the ears of my heart hath it sounded: after the winter of my sins hath departed, and Thou invitest me to follow Thee Whom my soul loveth. But tell me, I pray Thee, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions? For Thee alone do I desire to follow and to imitate, for Thou art my health.*

Christ inviteth the soul to perfection. *But who shall separate me from Thy love, and from the study of perfection? shall tribulation or distress, or hunger or thirst, or any other creature? I will climb up into the sycamore tree, and tread under foot the vanity of this world, that with Zaccheus I may see Thee, O Thou the desire of all nations. I will mount up to the palm tree, and I will take hold of the fruits thereof, I will enter with all fulness into the perfect love of Thy law. O good Jesu, how small is my labour! how great is my rest! how sweet will it be to follow Thee, my Lord! Thy conversation hath no bitterness; but greatest sweetness hath the imitation of Thee. For behold Thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant art Thou; shew me Thy countenance, into which the Angels desire to look, and it satisfieth me. But alas, what is it, O Lord, that delayeth my desires and the study of perfection? Behold, behold, O Lord, it is these things —: and can it be, O Jesu, that things such as these should impede me, and prevent me from following Thee, from tasting how sweet Thou art, how pleasant is Thy fruit unto my throat?*

Desire of perfection. Act of love. Contempt of the world. Desire of imitating Christ.

At all events, let the example of worldly desires warn and move me: for what ambitious man have we ever seen content with the dignities he has attained, and not panting for one beyond? So also of every curious man the

¹ Song of Solomon ii. 10, 14.

eye is not satiated with seeing, nor the ear satisfied with hearing. What is the case with those who are the slaves of covetousness, or lovers of pleasures, or follow after vain praises? Do not their insatiable desires condemn me of negligence and lukewarmness? Certainly it should cover us with shame to be found less desirous of spiritual good. Now that my soul is converted unto Thee, my God, let it not follow after righteousness with less affection than it formerly pursued iniquity. Let me be ashamed to be more negligently bent on life than I once was on death; to be actuated with less zeal in attaining increase of salvation than formerly in increasing perdition. For that we may be without excuse in neglecting the way of life, it is so ordered that the more swiftly we run, we run with the greater ease; and Thy light burden, the more largely it increases, becomes the more easily borne. What shall I answer unto thee? is it a matter of such great worth to me to be miserable, and liable to so many imperfections? do I so highly prize this universal vanity of all things, that I should be unworthy to be perfect and blessed, and to be Thine, and to cling steadfastly unto Thee? On my bed and in my pleasure I sought for Thee, and found Thee not; I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek for Thee Whom my soul loveth. I sought Thee and found Thee not; I found not my rest, I found not where the sole of my foot might find rest, I found in my soul no resting-place for Thee. Draw me, I pray Thee, after Thee, and we will run after the savour of Thy good ointments. Behold on this day I make protestation in Thy presence, O Lord, Who hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, that I might walk before Thee in the light of the living. To all eternity I will never turn aside from Thy commandments: I have put off my coat; how again shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them^m? But I will go from strength to strength, until I shall see the God of gods in Sion, and I will dwell in Thy house all the days of my life. And why should I not desire to dwell in Thy house, when out of Thine infinite loving-kindness, day after day, Thou art ready to turn aside into my house, and to make Thine abode there? This one care should make me anxious at all times, and stir me up, that my soul, O Jesus, might be a mansion all clothed within with the pure gold of charity, and adorned with every precious stone, in order to entertain Thee. But since every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from Thee, the Father of light, open Thine hand, I beseech Thee, and fill my soul with blessing. Water, I pray Thee, with Thy grace these my desires after

Doth not the child of the world teach thee a child of light?

How sweet to serve God!

Oh how great the rest of the fervent soul!

Protestation of amendment.

Preparation for Communion.

^m Song of Solomon iii. 2; v. 3.

perfection ;—the vine which Thou hast brought out of Egypt, in order that from it Thou mightest drink the wine of gladness ; that it might no longer render unto Thee wild grapes instead of those that are good, but might bring forth fruit thirty-fold, yea sixty, yea an hundred-fold in its season. Amen.

RULES FOR ACQUIRING PERFECTION.

FIRST of all ascertain to what degree of perfection you have already attained, and for this purpose consult some book of holy practice. And when you have ascertained this, then determine with yourself some definite object or goal, some other degree which you will labour to attain to with great endeavours for a certain time ; resolving that you will take no rest, and give no slumber to your eyes, until you have succeeded in your attempt. The degrees of virtue are well defined to be three, of which the first is burning desire. The second is successful prosecution. The third is fulfilment of the same with ease and gladness. Out of these you may easily collect and appoint for yourself others ; for as each virtue has various acts, some more easy, others more difficult, so there may be assigned to it various degrees of perfection. Thus it is the lowest degree of charity to love the friend by whom you are loved ; the second is to love your enemy for the sake of God ; the third is to overcome your enemy by kindnesses. It is one step of charity to seek the benefit of a friend together with your own gain : it is a higher step to seek the same to one's own loss : but highest of all to seek our friend's good by one's own death ; for greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. And such is the case likewise with the other virtues.

Secondly, it will be serviceable to dedicate to God some pious endeavour, some victory over thyself, or extirpation of some fault. To this St. Chrysostom exhorteth all persons, saying, I therefore beseech you all, that each one of you, if not before, yet now at all events, will do his endeavour to root out of his soul that vice which most of all excites his passions, and by the exercise of pious thought, as it were a spiritual sword, to liberate himself from earthly affections.

Thirdly, very conducive to this end is a particular examination, and all the rules respecting it.

Fourthly, it has been a custom observed by the Saints with profit, to render an account of one's progress to a Confessor or some Superior.

Fifthly, many of old time were used to adopt some particular kind of penance, until they had triumphed over some vice, and after they had attained that object, they kept some solemn day every year in commemoration of that blessing ; even as it is the custom of the world to preserve the grateful memory of deliverance of a city from a siege, or overcoming an enemy, or gaining a victory.

It may be a sixth rule, to keep an accurate account of one's imperfections, in

the same way as one would of one's debts, which by this means one may endeavour gradually to discharge.

Seventh. It is of great service to reduce all one's actions to regularity and order, and then studiously to sustain that order and course which one has prescribed to oneself. Actions to be regulated.

Eighth. It will moreover be of very great advantage to avoid the least imperfections; for he that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little; and he who turns his attention to the least faults will, by the Avoid small faults. grace of God, easily avoid greater.

The ninth rule is, to take diligent heed not to prefer oneself before another, or to judge our neighbour: for when this is the case it often happens, as is found by experience, that in that point in which a person judgeth another he condemneth himself. Preserve humility.

Exhortations.

"So run that ye may obtain, sayest Thou, O Lord; draw us after Thee, and let us run after the odour of Thy good ointments." 1 Cor. ix. 24; Cant. i. 4.

"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." Isaiah ii. 3.

"Thy God hath sent forth strength for thee; stablish the thing, O God, that Thou hast wrought in us." Psalm lxxviii. 28.

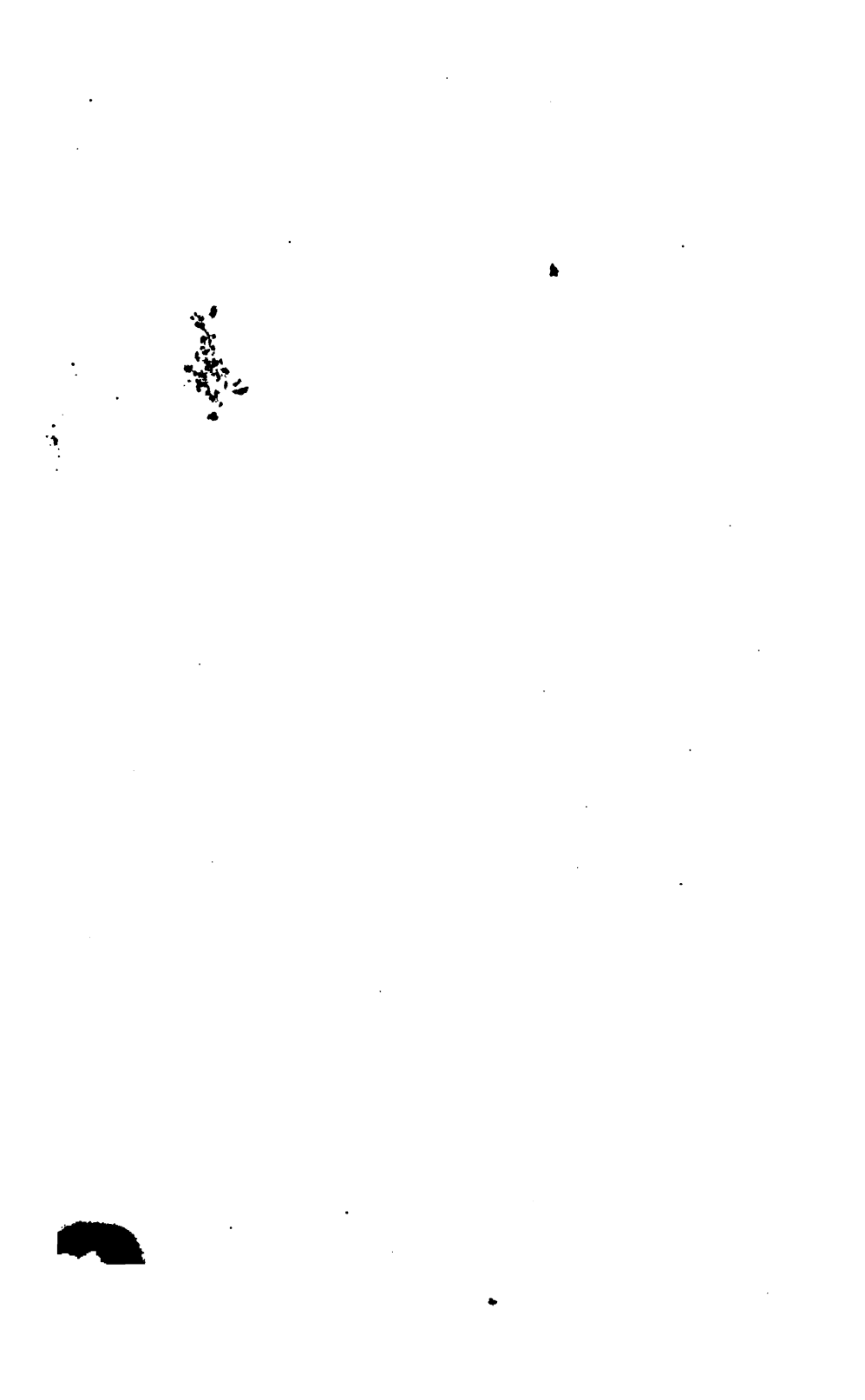
"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are Thy ways. Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well; and the pools are filled with water." Psalm lxxxiv. 5, 6.

IMAGE THE FIFTH.

IN EVERY THING GIVE THANKS, FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD IN
CHRIST JESUS.

At all times, especially on seasons of meditation, give solemn thanks (A) to God for the innumerable benefits to thee: for Creation (B), for Redemption (C), for the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (D), for the gift of Prayer (E), for the Virtues (F), for Holy Inspirations from above (G). Observe also and give thanks to God for the protection of His good Angel (H), who hath defended thee against the wiles of the devil (I): for His guardian Providence, which hath preserved thee from so many dangers (K) which others have met with,—from diseases, from falls, from maimings, devourings, from self-murder, from robbers, from injury, and destruction from fire and water. And how canst thou repay Him for so many benefits? Give thanks unto Him, and especially for His having borne with thee with so great long-suffering, when otherwise thou wouldst have perished with wicked men and evil spirits (L). Let thy heart, therefore, in pouring forth the praises of God, hunger and thirst after Perfection (M), and know that there is no rest or repose to be found but in Him and in His will.





Exercise

CONCERNING GIVING OF THANKS.

IN the former chapter thou hast exhortations and exercises on the study of perfection. I will now add four things more, by which thou mayst be assisted towards the attainment of it in the judgment of the Saints. Among these the first place hath the giving of thanks; for as ingratitude shuts up the fountain of blessings, so the giving of thanks makes the same to flow more largely, and draws down the streams more abundantly upon ourselves.

Preparation I. Place thyself as it were in the sight of God and in the court of Heaven; with great desire, but with modesty, approach the companies of the Saints which are singing praises to God.

II. Ask of God, that He will give thee His grace that thou mayst be able to give thanks unto Him; so that thy praises may not be altogether unworthy to be joined with those of the assemblies in Heaven.

POINT THE FIRST.

CONSIDER first of all what man is, how mindful of him his Lord is, and what thou thyself art. Secondly, reflect what and how great God is, Who confers on us blessings so many and great. Thirdly, how that all things which are in Heaven and on earth are the gifts of God, and with how great and sincere affection He hath bestowed them: for He hath made all things not for His own sake, but for thine, O man. Fourthly, what it is that He requires of him? nothing, forsooth, but gratitude alone. Fifthly, how unworthy is it to be on every side overwhelmed with benefits, to be loved with such tenderness and endearment, and yet to be ungrateful: and not this only, but for benefits and blessings to return evils. Sixthly, observe that nothing is so displeasing to mankind as to experience ingratitude from those of whom they have deserved well, according to that common saying, that the earth gives birth to nothing worse than an ungrateful man. Now as it is to man, so also is it to God. Hear St. Bernard: Ingratitude, he says, is the enemy of the soul, the making void of all merits, the dispersion of virtues, the destruction of benefits. Ingratitude

Ingratitude
in man de-
testable.

is a burning wind, that drieth up the fountain of piety, the dew of mercy, the streams of grace^a. Therefore in the way and progress of virtue, most studiously avoid and detest this vice. For although this habit is at all times to be humbly sought for by the grace of God, yet as at the beginning of conversion and spiritual progress, the gracious furtherance and assistance of God is especially necessary to prevent one from looking back, this must be preserved and increased by gratitude.

POINT THE SECOND.

CONSIDER for what benefits thou oughtest to give thanks; first of all, forsooth, for those things that are conferred on our Head and Father Jesus Christ and His humanity; secondly, for the Angels whom the Lord deigns to appoint to guard and watch over us; thirdly, for the Saints whom He has pleased should be our fathers and guides in the way of life; fourthly, for His kindness to the righteous; fifthly, for His long-suffering with sinners; and next, for His goodness to His whole Church; and lastly, to thyself.

With regard to the first, what very great benefits and blessings has He conferred upon us in the gifts He has granted to the human nature of Christ our Lord. First of all, in uniting it to the Divine Word; secondly, in making Him the Head of Angels and of men; thirdly, that in Him all the fulness of grace, wisdom, knowledge, and holiness dwelleth.

And on Angels also what great benefits hath He poured, by their creation, election, and perseverance, by the glory and dignity of their office?

In the next place, give thanks for the benefits He has conferred upon His Saints in calling them to perfection; in adorning them with so many virtues; in doing them honour by miracles; in crowning them with glory; and lastly, for the very many things He hath granted to their intercessions.

In the fourth place, give thanks for his bountiful gifts to righteous men, inasmuch as He bears with their imperfections, He purges and enlightens them with knowledge, He inflames them with charity, rescues them from evil, and delivers them from tribulations, and grants them a happy death.

In the fifth place, give Him thanks for sinners; because He bears long with them; calls them so kindly to His grace; bestows upon them temporal things; and lastly, vouchsafes to them oftentimes salvation in death.

^a Serm. 51. in Cant.

Sixthly, for the benefits He has conferred upon His Church, in that she hath Christ for her Head and Spouse ; that she is governed by the Holy Spirit ; that she alone hath the certain and true doctrine, the Sacraments ; and the regular and due appointment of Orders in a pleasing variety.

To the Church.

In the eighth place, give thanks for the benefits thus conferred in like manner on thyself, as if on thee alone ; for the benefit of creation, of nature, of fortune, and especially of the Incarnation, of the Redemption, and the gifts of grace, of faith, of hope, and charity, and of prayer. That God hath deputed an Angel for thy guardianship ; as it is written, " For He shall give His Angels charge over thee, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone." Nor is it on thyself alone and single persons that He has bestowed such gifts ; but on whole provinces, religious establishments, colleges, prelates, that they might govern us according to their own most godly counsels. Weigh with great thoughtfulness first of all the grace of Baptism, repentance, and calling ; and secondly, how many have perished, while thou hast been saved, before they came to Baptism ; how many after Baptism have been, by sudden death, cut off from repentance. Observe also how many adversities there are in this world, and how many opportunities for works of mercy ; and as many of these as thou shalt behold, from so many miseries hath the most merciful God delivered thee. Thirdly, invite all holy Angels, and in fine all creatures, that together with thee they may praise God for the immense benefits which He hath conferred on thee, so undeserving of them : and this may be expressed by the Canticle or Song of the Three Children. And fourthly, offer unto Him thine heart, and all thine actions, words, and works, with a most grateful mind.

To thyself.

Series of benefits on single persons.

POINT THE THIRD.

CONSIDER what great thanks thou oughtest to give unto God for the gift of prayer ; inasmuch as through prayer He hath willed that all His gifts should be derived to us ; not that God needeth our prayers, but converteth them unto our manifold profit and use. For prayer, as saith Bonaventura, is not the cause of His beneficence, but the way by which it comes, so that it is not on account of prayer that He has mercy on us, but that He has not mercy on us without it. Secondly, that by means of prayer we are at liberty to converse with God, and as often as we please to be admitted to the throne of so great Majesty. Thirdly, on account of the effects of prayer. For in the first place it appeases the wrath of God ; as the Scripture saith, Moses prayed unto the Lord, and He was appeased^b. In the

What benefits are contained in the gift of prayer.

^b Exod. xxxii. 13, 14.

second place, that it obtaineth pardon of sins, according to the expression, "I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me^c." In the third place, that it delivereth from dangers and evils, as is evident in the case of Hezekiah, who by prayer put to flight and destroyed the army of Sennacherib^d. Fourthly, that in fine it obtaineth all corporeal and spiritual blessings; what, therefore, can be of greater profit to us?

Consider, again, how great is the goodness of God, Who so easily granteth things so great to those who pray to Him, and often to but one prayer, as was the case in many instances of the Saints: and what ingratitude towards Him is it, that one should be so often indisposed to give Him thanks, and practise the exercises of devotion, and to converse with Him, by duly making our prayers unto Him, and so going on unto perfection? Behold, how lovingly He Himself inviteth us, saying, Liberality of God, and ingratitude of man. "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Secondly, how great is His loving-kindness, that God Himself, so infinitely Good and Great, doth not disdain and turn from such prayers, and prayers so distracted as ours. Thirdly, that on account of His fatherly care over us, He denies us those things which He judges to be hurtful to us; and in His own good time, when occasion serves, grants those our requests. For is it possible that He can deceive us, Who says, Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened? Yea, indeed, He moreover Himself hath added, with the greatest loving-kindness, What man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?

The Hymn of Jesus the Son of Sirach^e.

I will thank Thee, O Lord and King, and praise Thee, O God my Saviour: I do give praise unto Thy name: for thou art my defender and helper, and hast preserved my body from destruction, and from the snare of the slanderous tongue, and from the lips that forge lies, and hast been mine helper against mine adversaries: and hast delivered me, according to the multitude of Thy mercies and greatness of Thy name, from the teeth of them that were ready to devour me, and out of the hands of such as sought after my life, and from the manifold afflictions which I had; from the choking of fire on every side, and from the midst of the fire which I kindled not; from

^c Matt. xviii. 32.

^d 2 Kings xix.

^e Eccus. li. 1, 12.

the depth of the belly of hell, from an unclean tongue, and from lying words. By an accusation to the king from an unrighteous tongue, my soul drew near even unto death; my life was near to the hell beneath. They compassed me on every side, and there was no man to help me: I looked for the succour of men, but there was none. Then thought I upon Thy mercy, O Lord, and upon thy acts of old, how Thou deliverest such as wait for Thee, and savest them out of the hands of the enemies. Then lifted I up my supplication from the earth, and prayed for deliverance from death. I called upon the Lord, the Father of my Lord, that He would not leave me in the days of my trouble, and in the time of the proud, when there was no help. I will praise Thy name continually, and will sing praise with thanksgiving; and so my prayer was heard: for Thou savedst me from destruction, and deliveredst me from the evil time: therefore will I give thanks, and praise Thee, and bless Thy name, O Lord.

RULES FOR GIVING THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS GIFTS.

THE first. Besides those Rules which thou hast in various places, this may be added, to collect in writing the particular gifts of God, and to describe the same in words full of affection; and thus to imitate David and the Prophets, with whom it was customary, after receiving some singular benefit, to compose a hymn or canticle concerning it. Learn, saith Bernard, not to be tardy or slothful in returning thanksgiving. Learn upon every single gift thou receivest to return thanks. Diligently consider those things that are set before thee, so that no gifts of God may be void of their due exercise of thanksgiving. For although gratitude is to be shewn more by works than by words, yet it is most pleasing to God, if we praise Him for His benefits, and meditate upon them. And in each single benefit five things are to be considered; first of all, the infinite dignity of the Giver; secondly, His infinite love; thirdly, the excellence of the benefit; fourthly, our own vileness and abjectness; fifthly, the infinite liberality of God.

And for the more solemn giving of thanks, those blessed Spirits may be called upon that they would deign to join us, who are of ourselves so unworthy to return meet thanks unto God. And then all the creatures may be invited, and as it were in turn to offer up their gifts of praise; first of all, to acknowledge the Lord as thy God and Lord, as Jacob says, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, then shall the Lord be my God." Appertaining to this is the making a determination never to assign any thing to oneself, when one ought to attribute all things to Him, Who worketh all things in all men. Secondly, to resolve to serve God for His own sake, and not with an eye to thine own advantage. Thirdly, to offer to Him all thy works, thy labours, and thy entire self, for all things which shall seem

Make a list of particular benefits.

Five things to be observed in each benefit.

In what manner to be grateful.

good to His eternal wisdom and Fatherly providence, whether prosperity or adversity. Thus sings the Royal Prophet, saying, "What reward shall I give unto the Lord, for all the benefits He hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation (however bitter it may be), and I will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord (even with the offering up of my whole life), for right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints," inasmuch as their death is a dying unto themselves and unto the world.

The second rule is, that as we think over the years that are past in the bitterness of our soul, so for the remission of more grievous sins from whose hard servitude we now are freed, we ought to give thanks; and on account of the infinite goodness of God towards us, to be the more contrite for our own wickedness; and to rejoice in the Lord, because His Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other, Mercy and Truth have met together. Moreover it were fitting to render unto God some pious work, as it were for compensation, and as an act of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving for release from grievous sins.

The third rule is, as often as we have received any benefit from God, since we are unable to render unto Him any thing in return, to offer up to Him something, if it be possible, of the same kind. On this account the Lord desired that the Israelites should render unto Him a tenth of all they possessed, and that the first-born should be consecrated to Him. Imitate this, and "thy soul which blesseth (or, the liberal soul, Eng. Ver.) shall be made fat." For the streams of thanksgiving return to that place from whence they issued forth, in order that they may flow forth again.

For benefits received restore in kind.

Ejaculations.

Since gratitude is so acceptable to God, holy men and Prophets appear to have exercised themselves in nothing more than in giving of thanks: hence in almost all the Psalms this one thing is the subject of David: and therefore the Psalms are a Book of Thanksgiving, but you may select from thence some particular verses which are suited to this holy exercise of gratitude.

"Blessed be the name of His Majesty for ever; and all the earth shall be filled with His Majesty." Psalm lxxii. 19.

"O praise the Lord with me, and let us magnify His Name together." Psalm xxxiv. 3.

"O let my mouth be filled with Thy praise; that I may sing of Thy glory and honour all the day long." Psalm lxxi. 7.

^f Prov. xi. 25.





IMAGE THE SIXTH.

EXAMINE INTO THY DEFECTS, AND DO THY DILIGENCE TO ROOT OUT
VICE, AND TO PLANT THE TREE OF VIRTUE.

Take heed, O thou who studieth perfection, that thou dost often examine (A) thy Conscience, and of it demand the account (B), as if in the presence of Christ the Judge (C). Place before thine eyes the commandments of God (D), and thine own rules and resolutions (E). Behold how the demon accuseth thee (F), and how little good (G) thou hast done. Trample Sin under thy feet (H), and see how thou mayst avoid it. And now, by a holy and firm resolution of mind, cut down the Tree of sin (I), whose fruit is death, and plant within thee some new Virtue (K). Then take thou the armour of the Spirit, and oppose (L) with peculiar examination and care the Vice which most besets thee (M). Such is that which chiefly and more immediately retards thee in the keeping of the Ten Commandments (N), or of thine own rules and resolutions (O), that is to say, in the way of God. Watch thou for every Occasion (P) of victory, and observe that the first step in a holy life is the most difficult, the second is more easy, and the third the most easy; for Virtue herself (Q) shall come down to aid thee, as thou advancest on the way to Heaven.

Of General and Particular Examination.

AMONGST other exercises of piety, which are greatly conducive towards advance in holiness, is that of frequently searching into one's conscience, and adopting some method of self-examination. Of this we are able to say, "if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged of the Lord." Make this general examination as if thou wert solemnly entering upon it in the presence of God, with thy Guardian Angel at thy side, and the devil accusing thee. Now this consists of five parts, which may first of all be briefly stated, and then drawn out a little more at length. It will be found highly profitable to weigh these rules with serious meditation, so that afterwards such examination may be daily entered upon again and again with much fruit and efficacy.

Points of general examination.

The first, is giving of thanks for all benefits received.

The second, is supplication for Grace for knowing and de-
testing our sins.

The third, is entering into a strict account with oneself, by beginning from our last examination, and as far as it is possible, examining our thoughts, words, and works, by the rule of the Ten Commandments, or by that prescribed to us by the rules we have set ourselves, or have been imposed on us by others.

The fourth, is detestation of our defects and sins, which may be stirred up by various considerations.

The fifth, is firm resolution, by which a man determines to order his life better for the future; and it will further this end, to see beforehand what things one may be called upon to do and suffer, and by these means to have the mind prepared for either.

Exercise of General Examination.

POINT THE FIRST.

CONSIDER, first of all, under how many titles and attributes it is right we should offer thanks to our Creator and Benefactor. And, secondly, lift up thine eyes above, and thou wilt observe that no other is the employment of the blessed spirits. Thirdly,

Method of thanksgiving.

turn thine eyes below, and thou wilt hear in hell no other sounds but those of ingratitude, and unceasing maledictions against infinite goodness. And now consider which of these two thou wouldst wish to resemble. Fourthly, consider what little return thou art able to make for benefits so great which He hath conferred on thee, and together with all orders of Saints, and companies of Angels, lift up the voice of thine heart, and with all thine heart strive to praise our Lord and God; as it has been already expressed in many points under the last subject.

POINT THE SECOND.

CONSIDER with what great darkness we are encompassed; what errors overwhelm the world, and lead away the wisest of mortals into the most base crimes and madneses. Secondly, how many Saints have fallen into the most grievous dangers on account of secret sins. Thirdly, how uncertain we must always be whether we be worthy of love or hatred^a. From hence we may infer with what great humility and perseverance we ought to pray to God the Father to strengthen our memory; to God the Son to enlighten our understanding; to the Holy Spirit, especially, to bestow abundantly upon us the will to abhor known sins.

How necessary the light of the Holy Spirit.

POINT THE THIRD.

CONSIDER the pathways of thine house;—enter into the chamber of thine heart, and observe how necessary it is to cleanse that, and to heal thy soul: first of all from deadly wounds, and to cast out from thence the mortal enemies, which occupy that throne on which our most loving Saviour Jesus Christ would have deigned to sit,—to come unto us with the Father and the Holy Spirit and to make His abode with us. And if you will only consider with what diligent care you wish all things to be clean which have respect unto the body, you may easily conclude from that what ought to be the case with the soul, which in value exceeds the heaven and earth. Secondly, behold how useful it is to make up thine accounts now, and so to repair the losses thou hast suffered in thine eternal interests, and to look forward to the future. Thirdly, how great a part of prudence it is to perfect thyself, and to notice where we may have deviated from what is right by mistake, where from wickedness, where from softness. This it is, saith Seneca, which maketh us very bad; that no one looketh into his own life. We think, indeed, of what we may be about to do, yet

Method of self-examination.

^a Eccles. ix. 1.

even that but seldom; but of what we have done we think not; and yet counsel for the future cometh from the past^b.

POINT THE FOURTH.

CONSIDER how much a person grieves who has suffered the loss of parents, or of children, of goods, of honour, of favour, of gain; and think how much more he hath occasion to grieve who hath incurred the loss of eternal treasure, of the grace of God, and of His favour. Secondly, how great cause of sorrow hath man for having offended so good and kind a Father and Benefactor, by returning evil for good. Thirdly, observe from what cause any falling back hath occurred to thee, and thou wilt perceive that it hath arisen from a deficiency of true sorrow, and therefore exercise thyself especially in this.

POINT THE FIFTH.

RESOLVE steadfastly, as in the presence of God and His Angels, to avoid all defects, especially that one which thou art studying to correct in thy particular examination, and observe of what great avail in any matter is a determined purpose. This thou mayst infer from thence, that those who determine with a deliberate resolve to avoid for ever the society of an enemy, or to flee from any personal danger, can scarce by any means whatever be induced to relinquish their intention. But there are three ways in which determinations and promises are confirmed. First of all, if they are made in presence of others; consider therefore the Angels of God and His Saints as witnesses of thy resolution. Secondly, if some punishment be attached to it; for which purpose it is suitable to determine some voluntary affliction on oneself, in case of falling away from one's resolution. But thirdly, it is profitable to make known the same to others, especially to a Confessor, that thou mayst be likewise strengthened by a regard to the judgment of man. Fourthly, to designate and arrange in a particular manner in what way thou wouldst wish to order thy life. Fifthly, to resolve beforehand how to conduct thyself in adversity.

Exercise for Examination embracing the Precepts of the Decalogue.

Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not in death, and that I may never rest in sin, lest at any time mine enemy say, I have prevailed against

^b Senec. lib. ii. Epist. 84.

him. Come, O Thou true Light that enlighteneth every one, drive away the darkness of my heart, that I may behold Thee unto Whom I sigh. O how hath my soul desired Thee in the night, until the day break and the shadows flee away! Thou knowest it; and do Thou Whose name is the East shine in my heart. I entreat Thee, O good Jesu, go Thou before me to shew the way throughout the day in the Pillar of a cloud, and throughout this our night in a Pillar of fire; for without Thee, in the midst of life we are in death; without Thee we are lost sheep; without Thee we are blind, and know not the way in which we should walk. O Eternal Truth, scatter the darkness of my heart, that among so many ways and varieties of life I may come to Thee, for Whom I am, and live, and breathe.

2. Behold, I stand before Thee this day, O my God, confounded and ashamed to lift up my face unto Thee; for my sins are multiplied above my head, and my ignorances have reached up into heaven^c; but I stand a son before a Father, a criminal before my Advocate, a slave before my Redeemer; and therefore I lift up mine eyes, and mind, and raise my hope, that Thou wilt be merciful unto my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God^d. Grant that I may remember from whence I have fallen, and repent, and do my first works^e. I ought to love Thee, my Creator, with my whole heart; to like and to dislike the same with Thee; to trust in Thee alone, and to believe Thee. But, alas, my heart hath been divided, and I have made flesh mine arm^f, and I am brought to nothing; and I knew not that in Thee alone I both can and ought to stand, and live, and move, so that I may never be ashamed, nor to search into things that are too high for me, but to humble myself under Thy mighty hand.

On the second commandment.

3. But in like manner as mine heart hath gone after vanities, so also hath my tongue set on fire the whole course of my nativity, and that which ought to be the tree of life, to praise Thee, and to speak of Thee, O Thou Who art all good, hath afforded to myself and others occasion of death. O blessed and perfect is that man who hath not offended in his tongue! For he that thinketh himself religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain^g. O thrice happy is he, who hath perfectly rendered unto Thee those vows which have marked his lips. Behold, O my God, I render unto Thee these my vows — before all Thy people with my whole heart.

On the third commandment.

4. And would, indeed, that I had always delighted myself in Thee, and had kept Thy sabbath from polluting it, by being fervent in all things that appertain to Thy worship; that my lips had rejoiced when I sung unto Thee; that I had sung with my voice, and

On the fourth commandment.

^c 1 Esdras, viii. 75.

^d Jer. xxxi. 18.

^e Rev. ii. 5.

^f Jer. xvii. 5.

^g James i. 26, and iii. 6. 2.

had sung with the Spirit, and delighted myself in the voice of Thy praise. For Thou wouldst have visited the earth and blessed it, Thou wouldst have made it very plenteous, the river of God would have been full of water, and my tears would have been the wine of Angels; Thou wouldst have crowned the year with Thy goodness, and Thy plains, the powers of my Fruits of devotion and piety. soul, would have been filled with fatness^h, and the dwellings of the wilderness would have been made rich, the little valleys would have stood thick with corn, the bread of Thine elect, and Thou wouldst have strengthened me with wine, in the sacred feast of Thy Body, with the wine of the elect which maketh the maidens to flourishⁱ.

5. *Then it would have been my meat to do Thy will in the will of my Spiritual Superiors; for Thy sake with cheerfulness and constancy would I have obeyed them, nor with a stiff neck, and uncircumcised heart would I ever have resisted Thy Holy Spirit; for it is not they that command me, but Thy Holy Spirit which speaketh in them; for Thou hast said, He that heareth you heareth Me^k. If I had thought of these things how willingly should I have given them honour and love, and whatever else might be required of me, as to persons standing in Thy place, when they watch for my soul as they that must give account^l. And how, moreover, should I have shewn myself to my inferiors as unto Thee, taking care of all things needful for them, patiently sustaining their infirmities, and bearing their burdens, knowing that what I do unto the least of these I do unto Thee, O my God, and my all.*

6. *O how great an incitement ought this to be to make me careful that I should not hurt any one by any envious thought, or by any injurious act or expression; but should keep peace as far as it is possible with all men;—the peace of Christ which surpasseth all understanding! For we are Thy children, Who makest Thy sun to rise upon the good and the evil. And if I love and salute my friends only, and those that are good to me, behold, even the heathen do this, and wild beasts agree with their kind; but to overcome evil with good, this cometh by Thy grace, and is the part of Thy children; and this is my one and only desire, that I may be able to be esteemed one of that number.*

7. *And as I hope to be acknowledged as such in the final Judgment, therefore I wish to put far from me the base and alluring desires of the flesh, that with a clean heart I may at length behold Thee, and may not sin against my own body or that of my neighbour; but by a most strict guard on my eyes and senses may repel those fiery darts, which are kindled from that flame*

^h Psalm lxxv. Lat. Vers.

^k Luke x. 16.

ⁱ Zech. ix. 17.

^l Heb. xlii. 17.

which never dieth, and profaneth all things holy. Create in me this clean heart, O my God, and renew a right spirit within me. Turn away pride from me, which by Thy just judgment Thou punishest with in- Pridepunish-
ed by lust.
temperance, that by these means, at all events, a man may be humbled, and come to know himself, and to know that he was but like him who considered his natural face in a glass, and went away, and forgot what manner of man he was.

8. *Extinguish this concupiscence, I pray thee, in Thy servant, and also at the same time the lust of the eyes, lest, inflamed by covetous-* On the ninth
command-
ment.
ness, which is the root of all evil, I take, or purloin, or injure that which is my neighbour's; to whom, according to Thy com- All must be
poor in spirit.
mand, I ought to give what is my own. I desire, indeed, to be numbered among Thy blessed ones, to be "poor in spirit," and rather to leave all things than to lose Thee and all things with Thee.

9. *And as this desire is, I know, displeasing to Thy Majesty, so even much more so is the deceitful and false tongue (for Thou, O my God, art Truth) to smite my neighbour thereby and blacken his reputation, and to judge him who is the servant of another. From these things, I beseech Thee, protect me, O my Saviour, for I know that he who thus pierceth his brother deeply woundeth Thee; he who afflicteth and despiseth him, whom Thou hast bought at so great a price, crucifieth Thee.* The ninth
command-
ment.
He who
smiteth his
brother
woundeth
God.

10. *Ah, would that I had never offended Thy Majesty by these things! I know not, O my God, my Creator, and my Redeemer, how I ever could have been so unmindful of Thee, Who never ceasest to remember me;—me who even in being am as if I were not; for all nations before Thee are as nothing, and are counted by Thee less than nothing and vanity^m. Oh, that one would give me a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, because I have left Thee, the Fountain of living waters, and have sinned against heaven and before Thee, Who hast meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and hast wrought all our works in us. The many waters of my sins cannot quench Thy loveⁿ, which Thou hast deigned to manifest by benefits so many and great; especially in Thy Passion; and daily or weekly deignest to do so in the memorial of that Thy Death and Passion. Wherefore let me ever be mindful of Thy love, O Jesu, and let my soul pine for very fervent desire, and melt away at the rays of Thy love, O Thou Sun of Righteousness; Oh, that as the wax melteth at presence of the fire, so on this day all my sins and imperfections might vanish at Thy presence, O my God. Blessed be Thou for ever, O Lord my God, for Thy loving-kindness and mercy exceedeth my wickedness, and* Exercise of
contrition.
Application
to commu-
nion.

^m Isaiah xl. 17.ⁿ Cant. viii. 7.

Thou hast not dealt with me according to my sins, but according to the multitude of Thy mercies, and still dost Thou so often deign to visit me.

And now I have washed my feet, by Thy grace I will no longer pollute them again; for cleansed by Thy Blood I will no longer count it an unholy

Purpose of thing, and crucify to myself again Thee, O Christ Jesu, my amendment. Hope; but will diligently take heed that nothing in me may displease Thy most pure eyes; I will walk as in Thy presence, I will love all for Thy sake; and whatsoever shall be pleasing to Thy most holy will shall be most grateful to me, and I will accept it as from Thy paternal hand: for to Thee I desire to live, and to Thee to die, O Thou Who art my Life, my Salvation, my Joy. This I profess on this day as in Thy presence, and before all the company of heaven, whom I call upon to witness my desire, and to aid my weakness to Thy glory. Amen.

RULES FOR PARTICULAR EXAMINATION.

SINCE the ascent unto perfection can only be by degrees, we may here lay down a course of particular examination, which is so strongly recommended by St. Ignatius. This is when a person undertakes with a singular zeal to contend with and overcome his particular defects, and by degrees to acquire the opposite virtues. For which purpose the following course will, by God's grace, be of assistance. But in order to make use of these rules with profit, before he enters upon a particular examination against any vice, a person should ascertain, as Bernard advises^o, to what good things he is most disposed, or to what evil he is most liable; by what exercises he is most advanced; by what vices most easily corrupted; whether he has most reason to expect punishment or reward; how far he daily advances or falls back; how industriously he labours to bewail past, to avoid present, to provide against future miscarriages; with what constancy he endeavours to repair the good he has lost, and to keep and multiply what he has obtained. By these means he will come to the knowledge of himself, which philosophers, as well as Saints, have so highly

commended; and which indeed chiefly consists in the understanding of our own defects. For this purpose there are many pious books which might be of much assistance, as Thomas à Kempis, St. Bernard on Consideration, and others.

It is also advisable to consult one's Superior or Confessor, to consider over our past life, and attend to the roots of those evils for which we may at any time have been reproved by our enemies, or admonished by our betters. By this method a man may know the chief vices of his soul, and in what order they should each be attacked.

But this order should be first of all to combat external faults, and those

^o Bernard de inter. domo.

which offend others, or mostly retard our own progress; and in the first place to exercise ourselves in those virtues which are most necessary, useful, universal, and substantial: such are purity of intention, communion with God, zeal for souls, divine love, humility, obedience, patience, to bear with one another's defects, to detract from no one, offend no one, contradict no one. And before all other things we must seek after contempt of earthly things, hatred of self, and mortification.

In what order to be undertaken.

What points first in particular examination.

And here it must be observed that in the attainment of any virtue, the whole must not be embraced at once, but we must begin in order, gradually and constantly, from the more easy steps. For instance, in acquiring humility; first of all, let a man see that he praises not himself; secondly, that he is unwilling to be praised by others; thirdly, that as far as he can he avoids doing before men any thing for which he may be praised; fourthly, that he admits no excuses for himself; fifthly, that he watches against all thoughts of pride; sixthly, that he exercises himself in esteeming all men better than himself.

Vices extirpated by little and little.

But the space of time to be expended in the extirpation of any vice is until we have overcome it, or at all events have made such proficiency, as that we are able easily to resist its temptations, and elicit and put forth some heroic acts; or if it be for the attainment of a virtue, until we can practise it with ease when occasion serves.

For how long a time.

But since, according to Cassian and Ignatius, in the time during which this particular examination is carried on, in overcoming altogether one vice, all exercises, prayers, and thoughts, are to be directed thither, the Additions which follow may be serviceable to that end. For the due performance of which a day or two may be expended upon the consideration of these rules, before entering upon the contest with any one vice.

All exercises to be directed to one point.

Addition I. Among these is to collect together all things that have a reference to such vice or virtue, for it is suitable for an ascetic, or one that exercises himself in holy living, thus to collect passages for his own practice, as preachers do for the sake of others. First of all what the nature of the vice or the virtue is, its signs, its degrees, its effects. For each must know in what degree he himself stands, and what are his occasions of falling. There are many books serviceable for this end. Secondly, let him collect remedies from the same; among these are rules, such as to give alms, or to do this or that pious work, on every failure. Thirdly, motives to it, such are examples and similitudes which give a lively representation of the vice, and of its foulness and inconveniences; such also are passages out of Holy Scripture, and arguments derived from sacred writers and philosophers, on what is advantageous, good, and pleasant; and lastly, the rewards of the virtue, and the punishment inflicted by God on men addicted to this vice.

The nature of the vice to be enquired into.

Remedies to be sought.

One of these rules of practice may be to choose out the strongest motives, and to stir up oneself with these, by proposing some occasion of the vice or virtue, of such a kind as one has met with, or might meet with, and so to embrace

the one and reject the other; for thus the repugnance will be less, when in representing to himself this occasion a person will exercise his will concerning the virtue in embracing it, concerning the vice in detesting it. After this he

To commence by easier attempts. may be prepared for executing easier actions of the kind in practice, and be encouraged by self-victory. Thirdly, let him practise more difficult ones, that are near. And fourthly, let him attempt the more remote; which indeed the devil, with great craft, is wont to persuade men to aspire to at first, as for instance, to wish for martyrdom, in order to puff us up with pride, and so leave us empty and void, while he disturbs us with less matters. Yet it is more profitable to contend on a real occasion if offered, and if not offered to seek it for this purpose (except in the sin of uncleanness, of which every occasion and memory must be utterly fled from); but, as I said, if a real opportunity does not occur, then at certain times and seasons to feign to oneself an imaginary one, from which great fruit may be derived, while thus we arm ourselves before the fight, and provide against future storms.

Addition II. The ascetic must take care (besides his daily examination at dinner time and the evening) frequently to consider his advancement and deficiency; let him for instance, at some stated time, every week and month, consider the disease of his soul, whether it is being healed, or that the remedies are not sufficient. For if this be the case, others must be applied, or else we certainly evince that we are not anxious to be cured, but are wearying ourselves in vain. But he will perceive by comparing day with day, week with week, month with month, whether he hath committed more errors or gained more victories, for one or the other must be numbered. It is profitable to number our victories in the beginning, when our defects are many; our errors when they are more few. It is moreover useful to resolve beforehand to obtain a certain number of victories over oneself, under the infliction of some penalty.

Addition III. To take the proposed virtue, and the motives proper to it, for the subject-matter of Meditation, and so likewise of our Ejaculations, which are a kind of prayer; or at all events, although the Meditation may not be expressly on the subject of that virtue at the beginning, yet to turn and apply it to the matter of examination which we have in hand.

Addition IV. Prayers and exercises of piety may be altogether directed to this particular point, so that in all of them this may be sought for with great confidence, by frequent pious and affectionate ejaculations, and by imitating the importunity of the Evangelical widow. Nor will this be difficult if we observe how all things appear to a man according to how he is affected in his own mind, all sad if in sorrow, all pleasant if in gladness. For this purpose it will be worth while once, for half an hour or so, to consider how all things may be brought to bear on this one matter. For a prayer may be composed from the chief motives against this vice, and for this virtue, which may be opposed like a shield to every temptation. And thus all invocation and the like may be directed to this end.

Addition V. Mortification, moreover, must be resorted to, by which the ascetic undertakes some voluntary penance. Such, for instance, as Penitence to be adopted for errors committed. to fast until he shall obtain the object of his prayers; or to abstain from wine, as the Nazarites did of old, or from salt, or other article of food. But in endeavouring to extirpate any vice, an action of the contrary virtue is of all the most salutary penance; other mortifications, as in food, in drink, in curiosity, silence, and the like, may be directed as subsidiary to that end. It is also very profitable if any one out of zeal will undertake the same penance with thyself, until thou shalt have amended thy fault, both to obtain more readily assistance from God, and also that the punishment of a friend voluntarily undertaken for thy sake might add spurs to the fulfilment of thine own duty. A man of a good heart will feel more what another undergoes than what he does himself. Thus we have known of Saints who were wont to transfer to themselves a part of the penance of sins from the guilty person; thus Ignatius delivered one who was the slave of luxury from that servitude, by standing himself in cold water; and St. Xavier, by similar pains, softened the heart of a hardened man.

Addition VI. Frequently exercise a renewal of thy purpose, and earnest affection will point out the way to do so. But since this frequent Assistance of memory. renewal is sometimes omitted from the failure of the memory, this may be assisted by signs in particular places, as for instance, by a sentence set before one on the table, or a string tied to the arm, and by fixing certain times in which it may be renewed. Of these times the first is that of the morning, when on considering one or more occasions of this vice which have occurred or may occur, the ascetic considers some motive from the excellence of the virtue or foulness of the vice, and purposes to embrace every future opportunity of embracing the one and overcoming the other. The second time is that of noon, in which this self-examination may be shortly instituted, and desire again renewed as in the morning, and a comparison made with the former self-enquiry. The third is in the evening, in which the same may be done. The fourth may be—and it is one worthy of especial notice—at night, in bed; because that becomes deeply impressed which any one revolves in his mind before sleep. The fifth is when the striking of the hour is heard, in which, in like manner, from some motive or occasion of virtue being represented to oneself, the resolution may be renewed by a sacred ejaculation; which, if it can be done, may contain within it some constraining motive. Moreover, it may be edifying to add to each particular motive its own ejaculation, and thus to obtain a variety, so that the mind may continually be able to ruminate on something new, and thus to be refreshed. The sixth is an occasional one, when any opportunity may occur, either of temptation to fall, or of practising a virtue; a season in which it must be the more diligently renewed, inasmuch as it is the more needful when the occasion itself calls for the exercise of it. To this renewal of purpose by particular self-examination, according to the example of many Saints, may be added with advantage a brief consideration of the past hour, in observing whether it has been spent as it ought to have been, as one had appointed to oneself, whether any error has been committed in the matter

of particular examination, and then providing for what is to be done the next hour, and offering up all things to God. Now all this may be done in the manner which hath been here taught, or in any way a person may please.

Presence of For instance, if any one would exercise himself in humility, *O Jesu, God.*

Who for me wast scourged, and humbled very low (here some mystery, either mournful, or joyous, or glorious, might be mentioned), *what return have I made to Thee?* (Here the past hour may be enquired into.) *What return can I make to Thee in this moment of my life, which can never be recovered?* (Here the consideration and purpose for the future may take

Resignation and union.

place.) *I offer up myself, my vows and actions, my senses and purposes, in union with Thy merits, and I give thanks unto Thee for all things, good and evil, which through created things Thou mayst do for me, who am blind and sick; O Thou eternal Wisdom, I desire Thee, I love Thee, O Thou all and only Good, O true satiety, when through Thee* (for without Thee we

Love of God.

are nothing and can do nothing)—*when through Thee shall I become very humble?* Here the consideration, or motive which one

has adopted, may be mentioned in addition. For instance, since I am so vile—and here mention some point in your particular examination. Now such short prayer or ejaculation may be constantly made use of in the examination of the past hour and ordering of the future. But it is also desirable to change the ejaculation, as I mentioned, and so to refresh the mind; as the Psalmist says, “I opened my mouth and drew in my breath,” or I refreshed my spirit by opening my mouth with Divine words.

Addition VII. Diligently to read those arguments which have been collected for the purpose of exciting the will, as also authors who have written concerning the vice or virtue under consideration; it is very profitable every day to run over some of them.

Addition VIII. It is of great benefit to have an adviser, either one so appointed or voluntarily chosen; or if this is not done, at all events to disclose to a Confessor or other superior one's state of advancement

or falling back; and if the case should admit of it, to request some intimate friend or superior to take some occasion of trying one, either on the sudden, or after our preparation, according as our strength may be. If there were several that would conspire together mutually to admonish each other, they might offer up together certain actions and resolutions, and a renewal of their vows before the most Holy Sacrament; might communicate their progress or failure, consult together concerning the same, and stimulate each other to certain victories over self, or to future actions to be performed.

Addition IX. Frequently to enter into conversation on the subject, and by discourse with others to strive to gain them to labour in the acquisition of a similar virtue; for kindling the love of the virtue in others, (to take for instance that of chastity,) impels us the more to love the same, and to hate the opposite vice. It was therefore a wise device

Conversation to be made often concerning the proposed virtue.

of St. Xavier, that if he wished to depress the swelling of pride in any one, he would exhort the man himself, by getting him to speak to others of humility. But it may be noticed, that although this is usually applied to

the correcting of a vice, nearly the same may be observed in the attainment of a virtue. Certainly most persons are rather benefited by the loveliness of the virtue, than by reprehensions of the vice, for we are led on more strongly and sweetly by love; although in the regular method it would be better to begin by extirpating and destroying the vice like some bad weed, and from thence to pass on to planting the virtue. Yet the matter comes to much the same result in either case, as long as perseverance is applied in both ways; and therefore, generally speaking, one ought to commence with the more easy steps; all violence must be avoided, since the whole is the work of God, and all the points recommended depend entirely on His grace; in Him alone we must trust, to Him alone all progress must be attributed, and not to any industry of our own, otherwise we certainly shall make no advance. And therefore let this reflection sink deeply into thy mind.

Perseverance
necessary.

Particularly
note this!

Meditation

ON ANY VICE GENERALLY.

FOR the place of meditation consider some man given to this vice, and then Christ or some one of His Saints adorned with the contrary virtue.

I. Consider the nature of the vice, and its causes, what its object is, what its origin, and what its end,—forsooth a very short-lived pleasure. Secondly, its gradations or steps tending as it were down to hell, and in which gradation thou now art. Thirdly, its foulness, from its very nature itself, inasmuch as it is against natural reason, and is unbecoming in man. Fourthly, its occasions, how frequent they may be, and what folly it is when a man is able out of such opportunities to gain the highest and an eternal reward, to turn them into so great loss, or to let slip that good which can never be recovered. Fifthly, consider that by one heroic action abundance of Grace may oftentimes be acquired; and on the other hand, if any should reject such occasions, he may perhaps be altogether deprived of that Grace which he now may avail himself of, yea, indeed, even of salvation. Sixthly, consider that to omit such occasions is to afford strength to the enemy, and increase his power, whom we already experience to be too strong for us without such increase. At all events, if you wish at any time to overcome the enemy, why not do so now? Seventhly, observe the signs of the vice, and whether they find place in thee, that thou mayst not flatter thyself concerning it.

Nature of
vice to be
considered.

By rejecting
occasions of
virtue salvation
is sometimes
lost.

II. Consider the grievous evils which flow from this vice; first of all, the temporal; secondly, the spiritual evils and the hindrances of salvation and perfection, that is, of thy chief good; thirdly, the great disturb-

See the evils of the vice. *ance of mind which emanates from thence. In the next place consider the weighty sentences of Holy Scripture concerning it, —and also of Saints and wise men,—the common judgment of all the good, —and what it is that thine own rules and purpose of life demand of thee.*

III. Consider, first of all, examples in which there appears the detestation of this vice, from Holy Scripture, from the sacred history *Be wise by the example of others.* and civil life of the Saints, also among thy familiar friends, and the common daily life of mankind; observe what punishment they consider those to be worthy of who are infected with this vice — and what reward those who are endued with the opposite virtue. Secondly, consider how pleasing this vice is to the devil, and by what means, through the poison of pleasure, he gives men to drink of death by means of this vice; what loathing and disdain it leaves if thou obtain the gratification of it; what insatiable and restless desire torment thee if thou hast it not. Thirdly, consider if thou wilt mortify thyself in this respect, that God on the other hand promiseth thee a crown and unspeakable joy; for joy ever followeth on a virtuous work, as well in this life as in the next; and what folly is it rather to believe the great enemy than thy most loving Saviour. Fourthly, consider what advice thou wouldst give thy friend in this matter; and what thou wilt wish to have done in death.

A Prayer.

Do I with firm faith believe these things, and doth Thy goodness demand this of me? Certainly Thine arrows stick fast in me^p, O my God; quicken me, and lead me into the path of Thy commandments.

O most loving Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before Thee; I am no more worthy to be called Thy son; but make me, O most merciful Jesu, one of Thine hired servants. And what are the wages of my hire, but Thou Thyself, good Jesu, an exceeding great reward.

Wash me more and more, good Lord, from this mine iniquity —; cleanse Thou me from this my sin, Thou Who hast so loved me, and washed me with Thine own Blood.

Heal Thou me, O Lord, and I shall be healed^q; save me, O Jesu, and I shall be saved; and in the time while Thou mayest be found^r, let me seek for Thee with my whole heart.

What profit is there in my blood, if I go down into corruption; therefore go not Thou far from me: O Lord, my God, haste Thee to help me^s.

Thou hast been my succour; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation^t.

^p Psalm xxxviii. 2.

^r Isaiah lv. 6.

^s Psalm lxxi. 10.

^q Jer. xvii. 14.

^t Psalm xxvii. 11.

Meditation

FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF A VIRTUE.

I. CONSIDER that virtue is nothing else than a habit, by which the mind of man is healed, by which as it were the blind obtains sight, What virtue is. the lame walks; and since we should so earnestly desire such restoration in body, how much we ought to desire it for the soul. Secondly, that as a man cannot heal himself from infirmities of the body, such as blindness for instance, so neither from any disease of the mind can he restore himself without the especial grace of God, notwithstanding any remedies he may apply to it; for all these can have no power in themselves, excepting such as He gives them, and therefore attribute all things unto Him. Thirdly, consider that virtue is threefold, political, hypocritical, and true. And what is this latter, but such as is actuated by a sincere love of God, and a true desire to please Him; it is that with which the soul adorns itself, that as a bride it may please the Bridegroom. Have this end constantly set before thine eyes, to this aspire with thy whole breast.

II. Consider the nature of the virtue, its effects, causes, end, its steps and gradations; but these are, first of all the purpose of acquiring the virtue; secondly, courage against temptations The effects of virtue. and difficulties; thirdly, delight in the exercise of the virtue. Attend moreover to what its effect is wont to be in the understanding, what in the will, what in things external, and in its operation, and how thine own powers are engaged in the attainment of it; finally, what its signs and occasions are. Secondly, consider the beauty and nobleness of it;—how conformable to reason;—how becoming in a Christian and a religious man. Thirdly, how far thou mayst have been and still art from the attainment of it. Fourthly, how great the necessity of it.

III. Consider the advantages of virtue. First, the repose, the tranquillity, the regularity of a soul in which a man governs himself. Advantages of virtue. Secondly, even the well-being of the body also, for the virtues while they allay the passions, render the body fresh and vigorous. Thirdly, consider the disadvantages which arise from the want of the virtue, for oftentimes, oh, how often does it happen! that How hurtful a little matter. a matter apparently trifling, which serves as an impediment against some virtue, hinders very many blessings, and is as it were the bolt which closes up the door against spiritual delights.

IV. Consider weighty sayings of Holy Scripture; secondly, of the Saints; thirdly, of wise men; fourthly, the common judgment of all good men; fifthly, the obligation of thine own Weight of authority.

religious rules; sixthly, the means to attain it which the Saints have used.

V. Consider the examples which are set before thee, as if they were given and bequeathed to thee in particular; first, indeed, of all, consider, as in God most Good and Great, that which is in Christ the Lord; and then also in His Saints, philosophers, and others; and lastly, in thine own acquaintance. Examples.

VI. Consider, first, how pleasing to God this virtue is. Secondly, the praise and good report of those who have been remarkable for that virtue in this world, as well Saints as philosophers. Thirdly, the heavenly reward which is promised to the virtue; and shall be given by the Lord to him who hath fought a good fight.

Exhortations.

"Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make Thy way plain before my face." Psalm v. 8.

"Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep." Psalm lxxx. 1.

"Turn Thee again, Thou God of hosts, look down from heaven; behold, and visit this vine; and the place of the vineyard that Thy right hand hath planted." Psalm lxxx. 14.

"Lord, Thou knowest all my desire; and my groaning is not hid from Thee." Psalm xxxviii. 9.

"Mine eyes gush out with water, because men keep not Thy law." Psalm cxix. 136.

"As for lies, I hate and abhor them; but Thy law do I love." Psalm cxix. 163.

"Deliver me from all mine enemies; and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish." Psalm xxxix. 9.

"Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness; and cleanse me from my sin." Psalm li. 2.





IMAGE THE SEVENTH.

BE CAREFUL OF THINE ACTIONS AND REGULATE THEM AS IN THE
PRESENCE OF GOD, TO THE GLORY OF HIS GREAT NAME.

Consider what things thou hast to do during this day, and at this very hour (A) ; and in like manner as if thou wert running in a race, direct all thy works (B) and all thy steps to the goal, that is to say, to the glory of God,—with a burning heart (C). And be assured of this, that without the Grace of God thou art utterly helpless, and canst do nothing (D). Pray therefore for this Grace, and do all thy works as in weight, number, and measure (E), and not otherwise than if Death were following close behind thee (F), and an Angel (G) and an evil spirit (H) were watchfully observing thee by the way, and all thy actions. Moreover do all thy works in such a manner (I) as if thy grave were already being dug for thee (K). Nor this only, but perform all thy actions after the example of Christ and His Saints (L), that they may be such as the Angels (M) may bear and offer before God. But above all things consider always and remember this, that God (N), with all the company of Heaven, is at all times beholding thee.

Exercise

ON THE CONSIDERATION OF THINGS TO BE DONE.

FOR the place of thy meditation consider thyself in the presence of God, amidst the company of Heaven, to set in order thy life and way for eternity.

POINT THE FIRST.

CONSIDER well, that perfection may, yea rather ought, to be gathered from the perfection of single actions, so that he may rightly be called a perfect man, whose actions are performed with exactness and perfection. See therefore that this be thy endeavour to perfect thine actions day by day, and as we are warned in Deuteronomy, "that which is altogether just shalt thou follow^a." For from thy works oughtest thou to perceive thy own proficiency. These are as the fruits that denote the increase of virtue within. For neither

In what perfection consists.

Talents of God to be carefully laid out. Fruit an hundred-fold should be gathered.

is it enough simply to do well, that is, to render *some* fruit, but we must labour that the seed of God's grace may bring forth thirty, sixty, and an hundred-fold; that His talents may yield the very greatest usury to the greatest glory of the Divine Majesty, and our own advantage. Think what unworthiness it must be deemed, when thou mightest gather an hundred-fold from the field of thine heart, which God has watered so often with the showers of His grace and of His blood, to yield but a scanty and poor return, that is, to perform thy prayers and thy actions in an imperfect manner. St. Bernard is said to have seen angels, at matins, writing down the prayers of the brotherhood, some in gold, some in silver, some in water, and passing by others altogether. Consider therefore thy works, and how they may be worthy to be written by angels, and run over in thy thoughts the doings of the whole day.

POINT THE SECOND.

CONSIDER well, that in every action three things are to be considered; first of all, God; secondly, thyself; thirdly, the thing in hand. First,

^a Deut. xvi. 20.

I say, consider God as the end; and to depart and draw back from Whose will would be sin in thee. Therefore, before all things, must it be seen, what is the end which He hath ordained in all things, and to the actions of all, and thither, as to some mark, must eye, and foot, and every deed be directed. Secondly, remember that God is present with thee, and ever ready to fulfil the desires of them that fear Him. But that thus it may be, and that He may be the first cause and beginning of all thy movements, thou must needs be united and joined to Him; and must attempt nothing except according to His will; else thou canst do nothing to good purpose, for though He may not indeed withhold from thee His concurrence, yet He will His co-operation. Is it not this that the Psalmist teacheth, saying, "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain ^b?" Surely he strives in vain to build a tower, who hath not the means wherewith to finish it^c. Implore therefore His help very humbly, that thou mayst know His purpose, and what He would have thee to pursue, and mayst be enabled to direct thy counsels towards the same. In the next place put all thy trust in Him, and lay aside carefulness, after the counsel of the Apostle, who saith, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer let your requests be made known unto God^d:" as again, another Apostle, "Casting all your care upon Him^e." For disquietude hinders God's grace, and our own diligence; and while it lasts, it is a very hard matter, as in a storm, to hold on a straight course; if therefore any such arise, be instant in prayer together with Christ the Lord in the garden, till calm and peace return. Lastly, as I said before, thou must keep watch on thyself, and that because of thyself thou canst do nothing, but dost altogether depend upon God, as much as the sun's rays do upon the sun, the hammer on the workman, the pen upon the writer. So that the Scripture saith not without reason, God worketh all in all. And we are by faith fully assured that in order to salvation none can work at all to any good purpose without God's grace.

O man, take heed to thine end!

Trust to be placed in God.

Our cares to be cast on God.

Distrust thyself, if thou wouldst advance.

The presence of God.

POINT THE THIRD.

CONSIDER well, in what manner the matter before thee is to be done, or how thou mayst be able to perform thine actions with perfection, and how certain thou wouldst be to do so, if thou wert always beholding God present as the Judge and Umpire of the combat thou art waging. Secondly, consider the enemy, who keeps watching thee

^b Psalm cxxvii. 1.

^d Phil. iv. 6.

^c Luke xiv. 28.

^e 1 Peter v. 7.

in order that he may accuse thee, and thine Angel watching thee in order to note down thy good deeds, which the Lord shall crown hereafter. Thirdly, take heed that thou do thy works in weight and number and measure, that so thou mayst be like unto God^f. Fourthly, know also that it much conduces to perfection, very often to set the example of Christ and of holy men before thee. Fifthly, to be diligent in maintain-

A quiet spirit
to be main-
tained.

ing freedom and quietness of spirit; for let a man once lose that, and he is straightway as one who is out of the orbit of his course, and as a branch which is out of the Vine, and which yet can never be able to bear fruit, except it abide in the Vine. Sixthly, consider well that all things ought to be done as though it were thy last hour, and nothing remained for thee to do in this life, but this one thing thou hast in hand, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. And I would have thee not to consider, or much regard the trouble of this exact mode of doing things; for with this truth thou oughtest to be

Observe
that custom
makes all
things easy.

What must
be done after
an action.

thoroughly imbued, that *the best method of living is that which is to be chosen, and that it is the most certain of all certainties, that by a little practice it will become pleasant*. Lastly, consider, what thou must do after the action; for many (which the Holy Spirit particularly warns us to avoid) spoil it in the end, because, after an action is well performed, they somehow attribute the action to themselves and not to God, as the Author of it. This fault be very diligent to avoid, and consider thyself an instrument in the hand of God, or as it were a lantern which He hath put light in, and which light will indeed be shining through thee, yet shining but dimly and faintly on account of thy fault and deficiency. Moreover, carefully observe thy short-comings, that hereafter thou mayst providently avoid the same.

Holy Exercise,

IN WHICH A PERSON OFFERS UP HIS ACTIONS TO GOD.

Let me speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes^e, and even as nothing before Thee. Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof^h? Who soweth a field, and gathereth not the harvest of the same? Lo, I am Thy vineyard, O Lord my God, desiring to yield fruit in its season: I am that field and earth which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon itⁱ, often shone upon by the sun of Thy Grace, often watered with Blood, often chastened and cleansed with the hoe of inward warnings; that Thou mightest

^f Wisdom xi. 20.

^h 1 Cor. ix. 7.

^e Gen. xviii. 27.

ⁱ Heb. vi. 7.

perceive fruit of me, the calves of my lips¹, the fruit of my hands. Receive therefore from Thy servant, the son of thine handmaid: receive, O most merciful Father, the savoury meat which,—taught by my mistress and mother the Church, that pure virgin, to whom as in a type Thou hast commended us all from the Cross, as to a mother,—I offer unto Thee, meat such as she knoweth Thou lovest^k. She hath clothed me with Thy grace, very goodly raiment, that my soul may be accepted before Thee, and its smell be as the smell of a plenteous field, which Thou hast blessed with the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth. For I will suffer nothing to exhale here from the foul sink of my self-love, but in pure and sincere love of so Holy purpose. beneficent a Creator, and most bounteous Redeemer, and dearest Spouse of my soul, do I purpose to do all things that I may please Thee.

With me now it is a little thing to be judged by men, or of man's day^l. For it is not man's day I long for, Thou knowest; but mine eyes are toward Thee, O Thou that dwellest on high. Thou markest all my steps, I know it; the enemy also watcheth them that he may accuse me; mine Angel watcheth them that he may adorn me with Thy glory. I know, O God, I can do nothing, yea, can not so much as will any thing, apart Distrust of self. from Thee: for without Thee the enemy would hold my will captive, would make me to will mine own pleasure, and thence would weave a chain for me. Therefore will I walk before Thee this day as if it were my last: so will I run, that I may receive the prize, which is Thyself, O my God, the God of my heart, and my All. O how breaketh out my soul for the very fervent desire that it hath alway unto Thy judgments^m! But most of all hath it longed after Thee in the night of desolation, that in the morning it may wake up unto Thee, and embrace Thee; and daily will I begin, as it were, leaving those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are beforeⁿ. But that so I may be able to do, early in the morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land, in the morning unto Thee will I pray; my voice shalt Thou hear betimes in the morning, O Lord, and Thou shalt shew the light of Thy countenance upon me.

Thou shalt arise, O Sun of righteousness, in mine heart^o? What do I say? Thou, the Eternal Word, again as it were made flesh, of Thy infinite condescension at the invocation of Thy priests, shalt dwell in me; and I shall behold Thy glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and of love beyond all love. But when Thou shalt arise in me, shall not the darkness of my sins be scattered, and wilt Thou not make peace in my borders, and fill me with

¹ Hosea xiv. 2.

^l 1 Cor. iv. 3. Marginal reading.

ⁿ Phil. iii. 13.

^k Gen. xxvii. 9.

^m Psalm xix. 20.

^o Mal. iv. 2.

Application
to the Com-
munion.

the fat of wheat? O how amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord! Thine
 Oblation of altars, O Lord of hosts! I will come, and will offer sacrifice
 self. unto Thee with all reverence in Thy sight, with a contrite and
 humbled heart, and I know Thou wilt not despise it, but wilt look upon the
 face of Thine Anointed, and wilt have mercy upon me, in a barren and
 trackless land, where no water is: for therefore have I now appeared in
 Thy presence, that I might behold Thy face, and Thine infinite charity. From
 henceforth, O Lord, I will direct my way in Thy presence, and Thou shalt
 behold the works of my hands, that I may do all by weight, and number,
 Our works and measure; for what is once done, I know, shall never be un-
 once done, done. Thou shalt teach me Thy ways, the ways of charity and
 in a man- love, that I may be meek and lowly of heart, may hurt nobody,
 ner eternal. but may follow Thee in doing good, and as far as is possible, by loving all
 men, especially mine enemies; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he
 also reap.

If our necessities must be complied with, and it be right to nourish and
 refresh this body, which is corrupt, and presseth down the soul^a,
 How much yet shall it be as a beast of burden before Thee^r, and for Thy
 to be given to the body. use shall it be nourished, and out of my necessities shalt Thou
 deliver me, O mine only Refuge. Lastly, I will always be Thine, as Thou
 art mine, and in Thee will I hope, and whilst yet there is time for repent-
 ance, by Thy grace will I expiate mine offences, and so shall I go forth,
 wretched man that I am, till the evening; for my days are as the days of
 an hireling^s; until the day break and the shadows flee away^t, and Thou
 come and take me unto Thyself. But lest Thou shouldst come unto me as
 a thief in the night, I will expect Thee every hour, like a faithful servant,
 until Thou come, and remember me, until the cry be made;—until the door
 be opened;—until Thou bring me in;—until I come into Thy sanctuary;
 —until Thou wipe away all tears from mine eyes;—until Thou bid me rest
 from my labours;—until I hear, Well done, thou good and faithful servant,
 enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;—until Thou kiss me with the kiss of
 Thy mouth^u, and I see Thee, the desire of mine eyes, and embrace and hold
 Thee fast for ever, yea for ever and ever. Amen.

RULES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THINGS TO BE DONE.

A VERY good method is, first to separate our actions into such as are to be
 Distinguish- done daily, weekly, monthly, yearly. Secondly, to perfect them by
 ing of actions. the pattern of Christ the Lord, and of His Saints; by making an

^p Psalm cxlvii. 14.

^r Psalm lxxiii. 22. See Vulg.

^t Cant. ii. 17.

^a Wisdom ix. 15.

^s Job vii. 1.

^u Cant. i. 2.

exercise of the presence of God, and of a pure intention, as has been said in the Meditation. Thirdly, to write out such methods proposed, and carry them about as a diary, or rule of life, by which, as if by a line prescribed, a person may adjust and measure himself.

The fruits resulting from the use of such spiritual exercises are ; first, tranquillity of mind, since order is the mother of peace : wherefore, when the actions are drawn out in order, and a regular system of exercises laid down, the mind is peaceful ; knows what is to be done and when ; corrects in itself a wandering habit of thought ; and readily drives away evil or unbecoming thoughts with holy and devout ones. Again, exercises thus prescribed as it were by law, let each carefully endeavour to keep to ; and so he will not easily fall back, yea rather will be careful of progressing, and will easily ascertain his own progress, by considering whether he applies himself to his wonted exercises more fervently or more remissly.

But note, that nobody ought to burden himself either with too many religious exercises, or too frequent a repetition of them, but to follow the example of the Saints, whose path was as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. They went from strength to strength, until unto the God of gods appeared every one of them in Sion. Therefore, religious exercises are to be ordered with respect to the condition, age, and proficiency of each, so as to admit of their being easily continued, since inconstancy is both discreditable and highly injurious ; thus prayer should follow reading, and labour and bodily discipline should follow prayer in pleasing revolution.

Learn therefore, how greatly it tends to proficiency in spirituality of life, to have stated religious exercises, and an ordered course of actions : as Laurentius Justinian says beautifully, It is very dangerous to choose to live just as the mind suggests at the moment ; wherefore all times, as well as all actions ought to have fixed exercises of virtue, and that according to the taste and disposition of each. For the Holy Ghost Who is manifold in His gifts, leadeth not all by one way, and often harm is done by not following Him when He inspires ; wherefore these exercises may serve as a pattern, and each may adopt either these or similar exercises of his own, (a practice altogether commendable,) remembering that this his reaching to perfection consists in his performing what he does in a thorough way, even to the least circumstances. How particular is our Mother the Church in all her holy offices ; how over-exact may she appear to one who does not know her to be guided by the Holy Spirit. For as He revealed to Noah in the old covenant all things pertaining unto the Ark, and again unto Moses all things pertaining to the Tabernacle ; and then to Bezaleel as to its construction even the minutest details : so in the temple of our heart He desires that all things be wrought to pattern, and is well pleased with such care. From this feeling St. Ephrem commands superiors to take notice of the gait, motions, gesture, posture, of each of those under them, that these points may be all brought to the best and soundest condition. For teachers not only shew their scholars shapes of the letters, but also put

Fruit of spiritual exercises.

Multitude and too great frequency of such exercises to be avoided.

Perfection consists in doing perfectly the least things.

Perfection of Solomon's temple.

The province of perfection in little things. before them every little point and distinction ; for perfection has its province in minutiae ; and just as a house is not perfected, when it has just got walls, a roof, and a door ; nor a portrait, when it has got a head, stomach, and feet ; but when every single part is exquisitely finished, so as to give character and expression to the whole ; thus is it with our souls. Take notice, that this is one of the chief illusions of Satan, to make these things be thought little of, and other things to be highly esteemed or reckoned complete without them. No sort of persons fall away more readily than those who are thus minded ; because he that con- temneth small things, shall fall by little and little*.

The mode in which our actions are to be set in order is contained in the Meditation given above ; but that it may be more plain, I will give an example.

A man has been used, perhaps, to attend the Holy Communion, but without due reflection ; he desires to fulfil this duty perfectly. He will therefore appoint a time the day before, stated devotions, and meditations upon so great a mystery, to be used in going to it, in the very act, and when returning from it. When about to go forth from home, he will renew his purpose, when about to return, he will give thanks unto God, and the like.

But some one will ask, perhaps, whether it would not be better to lift up the heart, and adopt exercises, as occasion for doing so arises. The masters of holy living answer to this, By such a method our course of life would never have system. But as in respect to Meditation it is often said, that a subject for meditation should be proposed, but yet if the Spirit leads elsewhere, His guidance should be followed ; so in this is it well to do, since a man ought not to tie himself down, only to avoid inconstancy ; for just as there is no occasion for taking to oars as long as you have a favourable wind blowing, so when the breath of the Holy Spirit inspires, it is best not to adhere to stated exercises, but to follow the Lord the way He leads.

But let us beware, lest, as in most holy things is wont to happen, abuse come from the use of them, slackness from repetition ; but in meditation we ought to open our mouths and draw in our breath, that beginning in the Spirit, we may perfect in the Spirit.

Neither again, which is the fault of some, is each to leave his own practice, as soon as he notices any commendable practice in others, and take up theirs. This, if done without consideration, is often the effect of curiosity and fickleness of mind. For each has his gift from God. Not that any is forbidden from treading in the footsteps of the Saints, and reading their religious exercises, for to that end the Lord hath permitted these their works to see the light, and for this reason I will sub-join some further spiritual exercises. With God's blessing more shall be given hereafter, such as may offer opportunity to those that understand, and may direct babes in the way.

* Eccles. xix. 1.

Ejaculations

FOR THE OFFERING OF OUR ACTIONS UNTO GOD.

"Thou art my portion, O Lord, I have promised to keep Thy law," that is to say, in all my actions. Psalm cxix. 67.

"Doth not my soul wait still upon God, for of Him cometh my salvation." Psalm lxii. 1.

"In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil Thy will, O my God; I am content to do it, yea, Thy law is within my heart." Psalm xl. 10.

"I am Thine, O save me, for I have sought Thy commandments." Psalm cxix. 94.

"O stablish me according to Thy word, that I may live; and let me not be disappointed of my hope." Psalm cxix. 116.

FURTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES FOR AN HOLY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE.

To keep thyself stedfast in virtue, thou must needs have spiritual exercises, to occupy thy mind withal; for thou wilt never be able to persevere in virtue, except by such means.

First, then, thou shalt exercise thyself in prayer after this manner, and at these times with fervency. Before thou beginnest any work or deed, ^{Pray before} thou shalt call upon God, and pray to Him awhile, with some such ^{every work} brief prayer as "Haste Thee, O God, to deliver me;" "Have mercy upon me, O God," or something of the kind. Thou shalt pray also, whenever thou hearest the bells ring, or the clock strike. Offer up the prayers fervently to thyself, so that if thou art near other people, they may not see that thou art praying.

Thy second exercise shall be this, namely, whensoever thou hearest the bells ring, thou shalt make fervent purposes of a general amendment of life, briefly, offering up also, after a little interval, the Lord's Prayer. Before thou doest any considerable action, thou shalt briefly consider what, in those former purposes, thou didst resolve on doing. Also, every morning thou shalt purpose how to demean thyself all the day long; and before thou doest thine actions outwardly, or when thou doest any action, think for a moment what thou hast so purposed. Thou shalt also make earnest purposes against pride, thrice or four times a day.

Thy third exercise shall be, to think of some good thing, whenever thou hast any leisure time. For thou shalt have every day some one special thing to remember, of which think often, and direct thy course unto it. Take the kingdom of heaven to think of on the Lord's Day; the last judgment on Monday; the mercies of God on Tues-

What the Christian is to do, when the clock strikes.

Proper thoughts for every day in the week.

day; death upon Wednesday; the pains of hell upon Thursday; the sufferings of the Lord on Friday; and thine own sins upon Saturday. The sufferings of the Lord, however, and the mercies of God, think upon every day, as well as the proper subject for the day. And at the various hours of the day think of the sufferings endured at that hour, with some meditations on the subject for the day. With such rules for thy thoughts and thine actions, I trust thy time will be sufficiently taken up.

A fourth exercise shall be, to practise works of an humble and despised nature daily; constantly to choose the meanest place, and to despise thyself from the bottom of thy heart, accounting thyself worthy of no praise at all, but ascribing every thing unto God; and whether thou art praised, or whether thou art blamed, care nothing for it. Consider thyself well, and thou shalt find thyself to be worthy of no praise, but very worthy of all reproach. When thou art by other people, demean thyself with silence, modesty, and gentleness, and yet becomingly too.

A fifth exercise shall be, to shun all things that betoken pride, as being loud in conversation, and so of other things.

A sixth exercise shall be, to consider thy faults often, wherever thou art; and let not any little fault thou committest, pass uncensured; since he who does not take account of little things, often falls into greater.

A seventh exercise shall be, to keep strict guard upon thine eyes, wherever thou art, for from carelessness of the eyes, arise mischiefs without end. Therefore keep strict guard upon thine eyes.

An eighth exercise is to consider the good things of others, and not the evil. When therefore thou seest any body sin, consider that if he had such help from God as thou thyself hast, he would be more fervent far than thou, to correct his faults. On the other hand, when thou seest another do a good action, consider in what way thou mayst imitate his example.

A ninth exercise shall be, to look at the best side of all that thou seest or hearest in other men, and so thou shalt keep clear of suspiciousness.

A tenth exercise shall be, wherever thou art, to demean thyself outwardly with complaisance and composure; for inward discomposure is a token of an undevout mind.

An eleventh exercise shall be, at all times and wheresoever thou art, to see that thou do nothing which can be of ill example to any, or from whence another may think ill from thee, since to set others an ill example, is very hazardous.

A twelfth shall be, manfully to resist temptations, to keep aloof from sensual indulgences, and withdraw thyself.

The last shall be, always to stand in fear, and to behave thyself with modesty, when alone keeping the same watch over thyself as when thou art with others. For God seeth all thou doest.

These exercises thou shalt try and make thy ordinary practice, so far as may be, and shalt be diligent in beseeching the Lord to vouchsafe thee Grace to do them, since without Him thou canst do nothing.

Let me return from outward things to inward, from inward things let me

ascend to things above, that I may know whence I come, and whither I go, what I am and whence, that so by knowing myself, I may be enabled to attain to the knowledge of God. For by how much I profit in self-knowledge, by so much do I approach unto the knowledge of God. Whence do I come? after the outward man, of those parents, who made me the child of wrath, before I was so much as born; sinful themselves, in sin they begat a sinful being, who increased in sin. What am I? a man, come from a little moisture. For of human seed was I conceived at the moment of conception, and increasing by little and little, was made into flesh, till after a while, crying and wailing, I was sent forth on this world's banishment; and lo, now waxed greater, I am full of iniquities, and shortly I must be presented before the strict Judge, and then shall it be said of me, Behold the man, and his works. Think on these things more deeply.

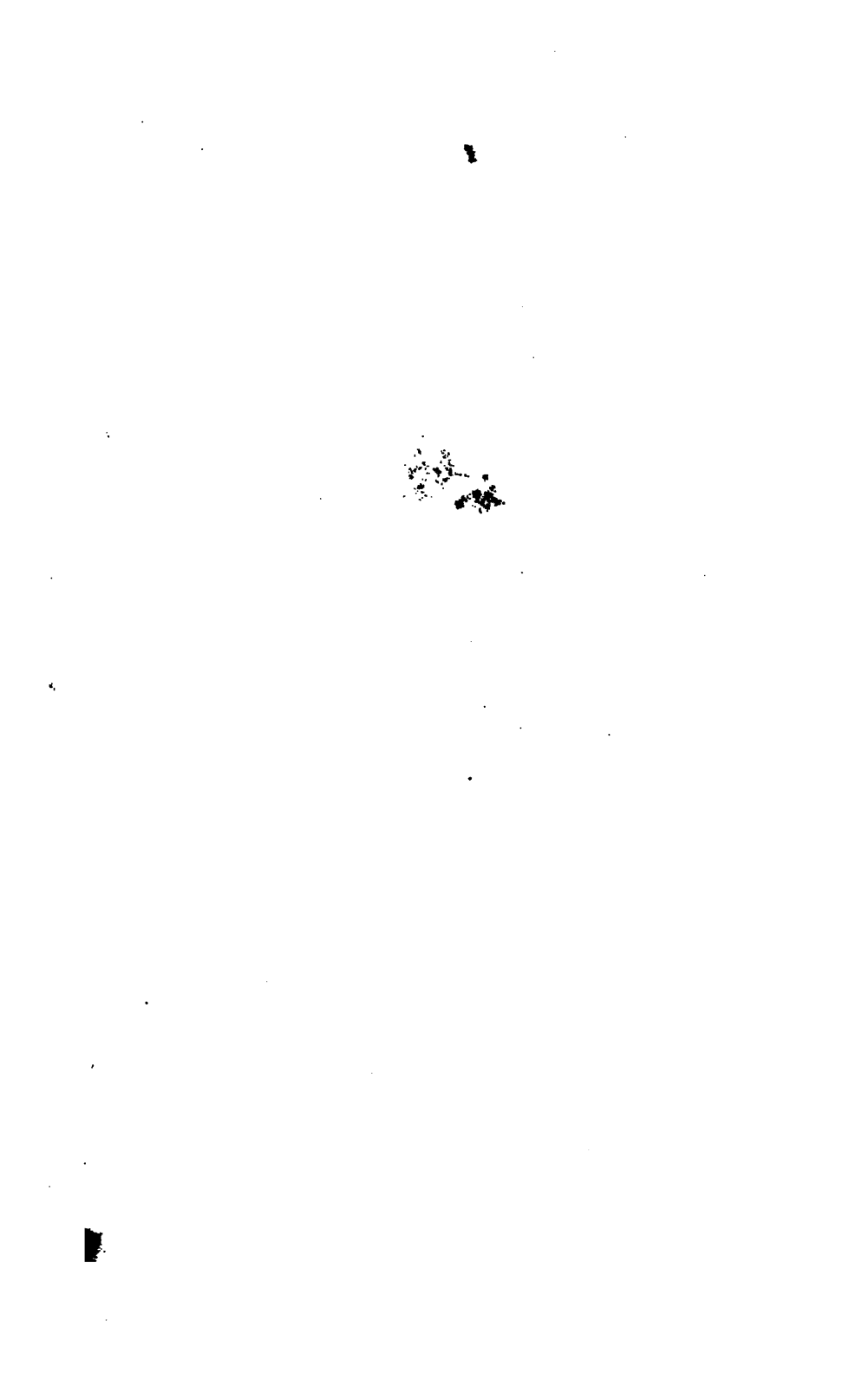
Self-know-
ledge very
profitable.

IMAGE THE EIGHTH.

CONSIDER FREQUENTLY WHAT ADVERSITIES MAY HAPPEN TO THEE,
AND PREPARE THY MIND FOR THEM.

Anticipate the evils and inconveniences which may happen to thee even on this very day, and remember that thou art born again in Baptism and called under this common law, that thou shouldst carry thy cross together with Christ (A), and after Him shouldst enter into Glory. Embrace therefore the Cross with St. Andrew (B), and strengthen thyself by the example of the saints, such as that of the elder Tobit (C), and of Job (D). For by the great charity of God (E), thy cross hath been weighed out for thee from all eternity, in proportion to thy strength; and hath been as it were sent unto thee by an Angel (F). If thou refusest this the devil will impose on thee a heavier weight (G). Resign thyself therefore unto God, that He may lead thee, and direct thee, for He only knoweth the ends of all ways (H); and take care that thou dost not choose thy way from thine own understanding, being ignorant of all things; and console thyself by this consideration, that the cross of one short hour (I), will be compensated by an eternal reward (K).





Consideration

OF THE EVILS WHICH MAY OCCUR TO US, AND FIRST ON PUTTING UP
WITH THE DEFECTS OF OTHERS.

RIGHTLY to act and suffer, with courage and hardihood, is the part of a Christian; but as much as the world endeavours to divert us from the right way by her soft allurements, no less do we diverge from the same oftentimes of our own accord under the pressure of adversities; wherefore not without reason did the philosopher place wisdom in these two things,—to bear and forbear. By this exercise, therefore, thou mayst by the grace of God compose thyself to endure the evils of this life and prepare thy mind to meet them. For as the common saying is, the weapons that are foreseen are less likely to strike; and we endure, says Gregory^a, with greater equanimity the evils of the world, if we are fortified against them with the shield of forethought. Every day therefore in the morning, as has been sometimes already mentioned, we ought to anticipate them by providential foresight, and against fortuitous attacks and surprises of enemies to keep the gates of our soul diligently guarded with an unremitting watch. After, therefore, we have settled and disposed of the things which are to be done, let us turn our eye to the things which we shall be called upon to suffer; and at the same time to look to God Who with the greatest goodness and equity moderates and weighs all things;—to the example of Christ our Lord and of His Saints; and to those eternal rewards which are laid up for one short hour of tribulation. And it will be of no little advantage to observe that the way of the Cross is the only way that leadeth unto life, all others are crooked and circuitous, and have an unhappy termination, although the beginnings are inviting and pleasant. But this consideration especially renders the mind quiet, that no one knows among mortal men which may be to him the way of salvation; and therefore in a matter so uncertain there is but one most

Patience the greatest safeguard in the way of life.

Look to the Divine providence.

The way of the cross alone leads to life.

Efficacious remedy of evils.

^a Hom. Evan. 35.

certain and infallible counsel—to commit oneself to the Divine providence.

First Meditation on the Same.

FOR the place of thy meditation suppose thyself in the presence of Christ crucified, when praying and dying for sinners.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, first, how in all this universe all things are so created and constituted by the Lord, that although there is a perpetual war among the elements, yet there exists a most beautiful and, one may say, most concordant discord and harmonious disunion. Now this same effect, which

Various complexions and senses of men.

is found in the qualities of bodies, is in souls also, which these bodies serve, and which are as it were within them. Since therefore all men are of different temperament, and of qualities variously dispersed and scattered, as Gregory saith, and also of different countenance and voice, so also is there a thorough diversity in their feelings and judgments; as is the case with children and men. Every body knows how different the opinions of these are; now the same is the case with all men in general; since one man differs from another no less, nay, indeed, more than the same man does from himself as a boy. Each man is drawn on by his own peculiar pleasure, and these pleasures are different among all men. Wonder not, therefore, when thou seest variety so great in all creatures, that the same is the case with their judgments and affections, and patiently endure it: if thou art old wish not for boys to be as old men; nor if thou art young for old men to be as boys; but accommodate thyself to ages and persons. Thou art not desirous for all men to see the same object with thine eyes, and in the same manner with thyself; why, therefore, dost thou expect them to have the same judgment with thee, when the intellects and minds of men are as different as their ears and eyes?

It is foolish to wish all to think with thyself.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that there is no one among men, who has not about him many good things, and, to use a common expression, praise-worthy qualities; and, in like manner, there is no man who has not his own particular fault, on account of which he ought to yield to another. Wherefore, surely, a person is very inconsiderate, who entertains an aversion to another, on account of defects of body or mind.

No one free from all fault.

For he ought also, at the same time, for this cause, to entertain the same against himself. But one ought to consider rather the many good qualities of another, and to compare some one defect which may happen to displease thee, with these many good points; and see how much these are to be preferred: instead of defrauding the other virtues of thy neighbour of their deserved reward and praise on account of some one particular fault; to neglect, as it were, a very fertile field on account of a nettle; or to despise a very learned man, because he is ignorant of some one subject; or some food, because it does not contain all things of itself alone. Moreover, it were but suitable to compare some remarkable defect of one's own with that of one's neighbour; and if it so happen that, from being blinded by self-love, thou art not able to discover it, then thou mayst be assured for a certainty that thine especial fault is pride, which of all evils is the greatest.

Why do not many good qualities in thy neighbour outweigh one fault?

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER that if another hath any defect which thou art free from, by whose Grace is this to thee, is it not the gift of God? and therefore, if the hand of another should lift thee up on high, on a ladder, or a mountain, or a tower, it would be ridiculous in thee to be puffed up with pride, because thou art higher than another who is left on the ground. It were much the same as if any one on horseback were to pass by another on foot or lame, and therefore were to laugh at him. Since therefore all the good qualities that thou mayst have are to be attributed to the grace of God, thou clearly deservest to be deprived of them, if thou insultest another. This it is which the Apostle says, "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself^b." And again, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted^c."

Rash judgment to be avoided.

Second Meditation on the Same.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, why it is that thou art offended by the defect of another. First of all, because perhaps it is disagreeable to thee, and thou sayest it cannot be borne: but why so? because it is contrary to the law of God? but God gave that law, and yet endures it; moreover at the same time God hath also ordered that thou

Zeal in judging our neighbour preposterous.

^b Rom. ii. 1.

^c Gal. vi. 1.

shouldst not be angry, that thou shouldst not be impatient, hath commanded that we should bear one another's burdens, hath commanded each to forgive his neighbour, to forgive our fellow-servant from the heart for the pence due to us; and hath pledged Himself to remit to us many thousand talents if we do so: and dost thou refuse to do this? dost thou with that wicked servant seize thy neighbour almost to strangulation, and criest, Pay me that thou owest? What sayest thou? wouldst thou rather owe all this thyself, than remit the pence due to thee? and seest thou not how God endures thy neighbour and with long-suffering waits for him? And art thou desirous to be avenged? Or is it because he hath set at naught thine own counsel? For what purpose hast thou given it, thou who art the servant and purchased slave of thy God and Lord? was it not for thine own advantage? And if so, dost thou not deceive thyself, and prevaricate? for all that is thine is in all things to be directed in obedience to the service of God, thy body and soul and all thy actions. It is for His own sake that He hath created, and preserves, and governs all things; He is the end of all things, and dost thou wish to set up thyself for an end, and so to erect an idol in the temple of thy God? to usurp dominion to thyself in the house of thy Lord?

It is foolish not to pardon one's neighbour.

The lover of self is angry with another.

SECOND POINT.

BUT art thou desirous in this manner to amend thy neighbour? tell me, who is it that can cure diseases, is it not He only of Whom it is written, that He alone can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Through wisdom, says the wise man, the ways were reformed of those men who were taught the things that were pleasing unto Thee. For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaster that restored them to health, but Thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things^d. Consider the works of God, that no one can make that straight which He hath made crooked^e.

God alone can correct man by His grace.

But suppose it is by the help of God that you wish for his reformation; yet when will this, His aid, be present with thee? Then of course, forsooth, when thou wouldst heal thy neighbour according to the prescription which He hath given thee; for reprehension from without worketh no good, unless there be One stirring within that speaketh. Whence Gregory saith, he who is zealous to bring forcibly another unto God ought to be actuated by love so great that, by the earnestness of his desire, it may be felt that such reformation, if wrought, is the effect not of himself but of his prayers. For then, with a more earnest fervency,

He who reprehends must pray at the same time.

^d Wisdom ix. 18; xvi. 12.

^e Eccles. vii. 13.

will he seek for the salvation of the faithful, when from the experience and taste of divine things which he has within, he brings every motion of his heart to those affections which are in his prayers. As, therefore, the sailor who, although unless he is mad he will provide all things necessary for his voyage, yet labours in vain, unless by the blessing of God he has a favourable wind; so also is it precisely the case in this matter. In the next place, if, as a physician, thou art desirous to heal him, thou must use gentleness, and not be angry, and leave vengeance unto God. What can be a greater misery than to be unable to heal another, except by bringing upon oneself a worse disease and a more grievous wound, that of pride and indignation? For all other defects are but small in comparison with this. And art thou desirous, against God Himself, to be healing a small defect in another by means of so great an evil in thyself? and as it were by Satan to cast out Satan? and often, moreover, to be thus inflicting a new wound and death? For often is it the case in the sins of others, as when one is desirous to cut down wood, the axe escapeth a man's hand, and the head slipping from the helve killeth his neighbour^f; the bread which he would give is converted into the gall of asps; thus it is when he admonishes another, who is under the influence of some evil passion himself; and is desirous to heal him, while he himself hath not composed that vice which rages in his own mind. And suppose that he who is reprov'd may be healed, yet how canst thou be healed thyself, when thou art unable to aid thyself, and unwilling to receive aid from another? How is it that thou art not able to endure others, who can yet endure thyself? And indeed if another could be healed by these means it were well; but since it is God that must work the cure, and He resists the proud, thou art of no avail, but woundest thyself by another's wound; while desirous to heal another, thou art thyself infected with the contagion of disease; when thou oughtest to stand thyself, in order to lift up another, thou thyself fallest. But he can by no means lift up another, as Gregory saith, who does not through compassion bend from the upright position of his own state. Behold, such is thy zeal, that thou desirest another to satisfy God for two mites, and yet thou art thyself contracting heavy debts? If thou art angry, and speakest harshly to thy children and servants, if they should break a vessel, be indignant with thyself, who utterly rendest the covenant and peace of mind with God and thy neighbour. They spoil or destroy or forget something, but thou art staining and injuring thine own soul, and forgettest thyself. This kind is not cast out, said our Lord, speaking of a devil, but by fasting and prayer. So also may

What folly to wish to heal another's disease and wound, by bringing it on oneself.

God resisteth the proud.

Vice not to be corrected by vice, but by virtue.

^f Deut. xix. 5.

you believe concerning sins, that vice, which is a devil, is not to be cast out by another vice, not by anger, but by patience; not by arrogance, but by humility; for how canst thou extinguish fire by fire? Therefore, first of all, overcome in thyself that vice which thou wishest to be cured in thy neighbour; for, as it was formerly the opinion of the holy Fathers^g, no one casteth out a devil from the soul of another, unless he has first overcome the same in himself. Finally, although the whole world should perish, yet thou oughtest not to lose all the good of thine own soul, which consists in peace; for such is the will of God, Who is able when He wills to correct all things by one word, and yet in tranquillity beholds them and permits them.

Peace of
mind to be
preserved.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER, that Christ was crucified by thee through thy sins, and yet prayeth for thee and for His persecutors: and out of His wounds giveth thee to drink of His Blood for thy medicine. Secondly, that He endures these things in order to heal thee, and thy children, and others committed to thy charge; and dost thou thyself refuse to endure any thing in them? and if thou art a superior, thou knowest that thou art so placed especially for this one purpose, that thou mayst bear the burdens of others. Thirdly, observe how God hath sustained and still sustains thee. Be not thou therefore an executor of vengeance, who art a suppliant for pardon. But there is nothing by which thou canst more imitate God, or render thine enemy better than by overcoming evil with good. If he is sick and evil, then you should consider that he is in need of a physician, and of that skill which is requisite to treat one that is indisposed. A mother who is injured by a child, does not delight in his being wounded, for she again is injured in her son. In like manner oughtest thou to be affected towards thy neighbour, remembering that the sin of another ought to be thine own grief. Nor rejoice if perchance thou art thyself better than others; but consider that the less good they have, the more hath been wanting and is wanting to thyself. But if on the other hand thou art angry, consider that thus thou art rendering thyself blind, and becoming by these means incapable of healing another.

Attend to
Christ's ex-
ample.

It is the part
of a superior
to bear defects
of others.

Overcome
evil with
good.

Be clothed
with mater-
nal affection
toward thy
neighbour.

FOURTH POINT.

CONSIDER, that there are in man two things, the work of man and the work of God; or as St. Augustine says, two names, man and sinner; as

^g Cassian.

he is a sinner, correct him; as he is a man, have pity on him. What man is there who hates a most precious jewel, because it is involved in mud or in a shell? Such a jewel is thy neighbour's soul; and bought at how great a price by eternal wisdom! although it is involved in the mud of sin. Canst thou despise him, when thou oughtest to esteem thyself as worse than him? Thou art unwilling to love any one but a good man; but whom dost thou esteem thyself to be? There is no one good, saith Truth Two things to be considered in every man. Every one ought to prefer others to himself. Itself, but God only. But what sayest thou? thou art surely ignorant of thyself; and if thou wishest to love a good man, therefore certainly one that is desirous to be so. Now tell me, I pray thee, if thou admirest the production of a beautiful statue, yet dost thou turn away from the wood, or whatever other material, such a statue may be wrought from? What wise man even would cast away a viper, although he knows of its poison, if he were desirous to extract from it a healing medicine for his brother. Do you think that any one despises a precious ornament, because it is in the hands of the enemy? would he not rather rescue it from thence? So likewise if the evil spirit hath thy brother in his power, thou oughtest not to be angry with thy brother, but with the enemy, and to deliver thy brother from him. Finally, say how thou desirest God and man to deal with thee; or wouldst desire if men were set over thee: such do thou render thyself toward thy neighbour. But he is not amended: yet God Himself Such as we are to our neighbour, such is God to us. Whose care that is, sees and endures this: He is the Master and Father, and thou as a teacher employed by Him, oughtest to observe how He wishes them to be governed, and to know that thou art assigned to them for their profit, not for thine own; thou art ordered to preside over them, in order to benefit them, and not thyself. Imitate thou the physician, nor wish for any other revenge than for the sick man to be restored to convalescence, and if he should say or do any thing wrong, consider that it is most truly to be imputed to the disease, and not to the sick man: and the less the sick man himself is disposed to allow this, the greater esteem his disease to be. Thus shall the fire of zeal burn with the oil of mercy; and thus shall friendly admonition avail more than turbulent accusation; the one inspires shame, the other moves indignation. Finally, in this manner shalt thou be numbered amongst the blessed, since Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Holy Exercise.

O King of kings, and Lord of lords, to Whom I the least of Thy servants owe as many talents as there are moments of my life, as
there are drops or sands in the sea. Truly I confess before
Thee and all the company of Heaven, that my sins are multiplied beyond the
hairs of my head: but Thou, O Lord, art the Father of mercies, Who so
long hast patience with me, not that I might pay Thee all, but
that Thou mayst forgive me all, yea that Thou mayst give Thy-
self to me: and shall I not have pity on my fellow-servant? shall I not
be bountiful unto him, as Thou hast been and art unto me? I myself ask
for mercy, and shall I seek revenge against my neighbour, that is against
Thee, Who art my All and my only consolation?

Thou saidst of old to the adulteress who was accused before Thee,
"Woman, hath no man condemned thee?" and she answered, "No man,
Lord." And what didst Thou, O infinite Goodness, say to this, but "Neither
do I condemn thee." So didst Thou, the Judge of the living and the
dead, but I who am a criminal shut up in this prison-house, and
know not whether I am worthy of love or hate, what shall I do?
shall I, myself a criminal, judge Thy children, and condemn my-
self? shall I stretch forth one hand to ask pardon of Thee, and with the
other in Thy presence push my neighbour headlong down? That be far from
me, O Jesu, my Salvation;—that one for whom Thou hast died, for whom
I ought to lay down my own life, yea, even were it a thousand times in the
day, that is for Thee, that I should destroy him with the sword of the
tongue! Shall I despise one whom Thou hast thus redeemed, that thus out
of my own mouth, and for my own acts to another, Thou shouldst judge me?

Shall I repel Thee in my neighbour, and yet shall I daily pray, as I do
now pray most humbly, that Thou wouldst come to me, and remain within
me, and make me blessed with Thyself? Shall I be angry with him, and
yet wish to appease Thee? Do I not know how true it is, "inasmuch as
ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me?"
I know it, O Lord, and yet shall I be angry with Thee, and shall I refuse
pardon to Thee, from Whom I ask pardon? Shall I strike Thee of Whom
I ask the kiss of peace? Shall I slay Thee in Thy little ones of Whom I
pray for life? Shall I deny to him the bread of consolation, and
yet myself, miserable and unhappy as I am, ask for the Bread of
Angels, for Thee, having in Thee all delight, as I do? Far be
it from me, good Jesu, whom Thou hast taught, and still teachest, and com-
mandest more even by example than by word, to be meek and lowly in heart.

Far be it from me, that I should quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed; far be it from me that I should be angry at the sins of another, who am overwhelmed by my own; for how shall I appear in Thy sight Who desirest mercy and not sacrifice; Who wouldst rather that I should be reconciled to my brother than sacrifice unto Thee; and with what measure I mete Thou wilt deservedly measure unto me again. Therefore I, in the first place, pardon all mine adversaries; although no one in truth has treated me unjustly, if I consider myself, for all Thy creatures ought deservedly to turn away from and afflict one who is the breaker of Thy law; but Thy mercy is over all Thy works. Grant me, I pray Thee, Thy grace, by which I may be able to imitate Thy long-suffering, and most ardently above all things to love Thee in my neighbour, and in all; and that too not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. For thus do I resolve in Thy presence on this day with my whole heart to love all men, especially adversaries and those that trouble me, and to conciliate them by some gentle word, and work——that all may know that I love Thee, my most loving Father, and that as Thou hast given me commandment even so I do; being prepared to lay down my life for my neighbour, that is, for Thee, Who hast deigned to die for me. Have regard, and hear the voice of one that loveth and seeketh Thee. Amen.

RULES FOR EXERCISING LONG-SUFFERING.

THE practice of this exercise is necessary for all: for there is no time and no place, in which there is wanting matter for enduring the defects of others. For what man is there whose attendant serves him according to his wish? What man, whose master satisfies him in the way that he would choose? Who is there that is free from faults? Who in all things thinks precisely the same with another? No one certainly. But hence thou wilt preserve peace and tranquillity, which is the greatest good of thy mind; exercise thyself in the practice of this sedulously and frequently, and thou wilt find its most abundant fruit, and no little assistance towards the exercise of all piety.

But in the first place, study before all things to keep thy mind at peace, before thou admonishest another; for anger, through its own vehemence, blinds the eyes of the mind.

Secondly, stir up in thyself grief for a sin of thine own, which is like that of thy neighbour's and of the same kind; humble thyself for this, and put thy trust in God only.

Thirdly, exercise compassion toward thy neighbour, and study to alleviate by love the pain of correction.

Fourthly, implore the assistance of God, and after taking what pains thou canst, commit the cure to Him; for it is God that healeth and maketh alive.

Open sins to be openly re-
proved. It must further be noticed that first of all public sins should be publicly reprov'd, but that which is secret and private should be secretly and privately admonished.

In the next place, that gentle applications should be first resorted to, then afterwards more severe; because, as Augustine says, as they are the better persons whom love directs, so those are more numerous who are corrected by fear.

Thirdly, very great consideration is to be had to complexions and persons and seasons, wherefore "rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father." For thus oftentimes we must turn aside out of the straight road in public, in order that another person may pass by; unless one is willing to run against many, and stumble upon those who are big with their own desires.

Ejaculations.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth." Rom. xiv. 4.

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. i. 15.

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." Matt. vii. 1.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. vi. 2.

"Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye." Luke vi. 42.

Meditation

ON PATIENCE UNDER OUR OWN EVILS.

SINCE Thou, O Jesu, eternal Verity, Who canst not deceive, hast said, "*Ye have need of patience that ye might receive the promise,*" and again, "*All who will live godly shall suffer persecution,*" and in another place, "*Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me;*" on this matter I would speak more at length out of love of Thee, and by Thy grace. And I entreat of Thee, O most loving Father, our Guide and our Lawgiver, inspire me with what is pleasing unto Thee, and what is profitable to my neighbour and myself, according to Thy great glory; that I may glory in nothing but in Thy Cross, that the world may be crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Amen.

For the place of meditation, to consider oneself in the presence of God, and behold His providence in things good and evil.

FIRST POINT.

FIRST of all, survey as from a watch-tower the many evils with which mortals are every where afflicted, and how great they are. Finally, consider what sort of persons they generally are, who most suffer them, and on whom they are sent from God, that is, from Him Who is infinitely good and infinitely wise. Many, indeed, of such sufferers are evil men; but yet many are good and innocent, and most beloved of God. And behold, I pray thee, are not empires, and riches, and favours, for the most part assigned to wicked men? And now look into thyself and see what sort of person thou art, and what thou deservest for thy sins that are past and for those that occur every day; and I think thou wilt have great matter of thanksgiving to God for His infinite mercy towards thee. For what are those things which thou

The goods of this world mostly among the wicked.

sufferest, if thou wilt but consider thy sins, and if they are but compared with the sufferings of Jacob, and Joseph, and Job, Apostles, and Martyrs, and others most dear to God? Consider, secondly, what wilt thou gain, if thou refusest to suffer, and murmurest against it; it will be forsooth but this, that thy sufferings will become far more heavy and intolerable on account of the repugnance of thy will; and that thou wilt add to those evils one of far greater consequence, which is sin, and evil passions of the mind, by which thou wilt be changed as it were into a beast. The impatient, indeed, is as a man who because

Evils and madness of impatience.

he loses one piece of money throws away after it his whole substance; because some one robs him of some light matter, he loses all that is worth possessing; and because part of his house is burnt, he sets fire to the rest; because he has received some slight spot on his reputation, he renders it through impatience a heavier stain. But a good man, if he suffers in body or estate, yet in his soul he has a great defence or refuge, and still greater in God. Consider, thirdly, what great praise among all people is given to the patient endurance of evils. First of

The praise of patience.

all with God, because thou acquiescest in His will; and by suffering thou shewest thy love towards His Majesty. For that love is shewn more by suffering than by acting; wherefore you will find a thousand persons who will give away bountifully and pray much, and yet will not, for the love of God, bear patiently a slight injury they have received. Now, I pray you, what and how great love is this? if it were true, would it not have appeared to be the same in kind, as that which is seen in the fortitude and patience of Martyrs? Truly love is strong as adamant, yea, love is strong as death, and jealousy is hardy as the grave^b. Secondly, consider, if thou wouldst be patient, how great thou

Example of holymartyrs.

^b Cant. viii. 6.

shalt be among those most brave lovers, the Saints, and that because thou wilt be made like unto them of whom it is sung, Of all the Saints how great were the sufferings!

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER how great is the patient man in the estimation of mankind; for there is no one who is not full of admiration at the patient man, and prefers to a conqueror of cities one that is able to govern his spirit. For he who is covered all over and protected with equanimity and patience, is as a brazen tower and an invincible shield. Nor does it matter whether it be in affairs of fortune or of fame that he suffers. For although any one may have detracted from thee with the tongue of evil-speaking, there is no reason in this why thou shouldst be moved, nothing to be angry at.

Each one
makes to
himself
good or evil
report.

For let any one speak or do to thee things good or evil, let him behave well or ill to thee, it is all alike; such will they be to thee, as thou thyself wilt make them, or such as thou shalt wish to render them, or shalt have rendered them by thy use of them. For as iniquity is false to itself, and not to thee unless thou consentest unto it, so all the evils it says and does are evils to itself, that is, to its own destruction; if thou wilt sympathize with him that injures thee, and wilt love him for the sake of God, and that freely. But this thou doest when thou art not only by kindnesses excited to love, but also art not averted from it by evil words, and art filled rather with commiseration for him, than groaning under thine own ills by which he afflicteth thee. For surely he is worthy of commiseration, for the evils he does are to him evil and very evil; but not so to thyself, for thou canst, if thou wilt, convert all sayings and doings into thine own great good, or thine own great evil, to any extent thou pleasest. For although in themselves they may be evil, yet they will not be so to thee, nor in any way can be, except by thine own evil use of them: nor indeed can good things be good to thee, except by a good use of them. This, therefore, is always the matter to be looked into by thee, what may be going on in thine own mind, and not what good or what evil others may do; but rather what use thou art thyself making of their doings; what, for instance, is the use to which thou art turning their good or evil; and how great is the proficiency thou art deriving from them, either by favouring and assisting, or by fellow-suffering and correction. It is from thine own will that all things derive their power of being evil or good to thee, whatever they may be in themselves; thus gold which he has seen, affords to a thief an occasion of robbery, and therefore becomes evil to him on account of his own wickedness; the same becomes good to a self-denying and merciful man,

The bad may
but afford us
occasion of
virtue.

because he gives it to one in want. As the sun hardeneth mud, and melteth wax, by one and the same ray; thus one man by adversities becomes the more hardy and enduring, another melts away; the one becomes honourable by them, the other worthless. For what now is the effect if thou takest patiently injuries, calumnies, and the spoiling of thy goods; if with a cheerful countenance, and still more patient mind, thou repayest good for evil;—will not this be a delight and joy to thee? will not all men, even the wicked, give thee praise for this? But what will be the case if thou art angry? to one evil in thine own mind thou wilt add another and that a heavier one. But is it thine honour which is at stake? well, let it be so: yet this is not true honour, in which alone thou canst fall by being impatient. But is it thy worldly goods that are endangered? art thou willing then to cast away good things the more valuable, because thou hast lost those that are less so?

Empty the
care of hon-
our and
goods.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER, I entreat thee, first of all, whether thou knowest by what way thou mayst reach Heaven; it is indeed most certain that thou art quite ignorant of it; therefore thus reflect with thyself: Behold, God sends me this tribulation, this is the way by which He wishes to lead me to heaven, and by no other: especially since, whatever means I may have recourse to, I am unable to avoid it. In the next place, since it is most certain that through many tribulations we must be saved, and that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; and since that saying is most true, “the world shall rejoice, but ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” Since, I say, these things are so, come, determine, art thou desirous to be saved, to live godly in Christ Jesus, to be sorrowful here with the children of God, and for your sorrow to be turned into joy? But if thou assentest to this, again I ask and enquire of thee, why therefore complainest thou? is it thy place rather to choose for thyself the kind of affliction and adversities, that is to say, is it for the sick man to prescribe for himself the kind of medicine he will take, or for his physician? is it for the general to follow the soldier, or the soldier the general? is it for Eternal Wisdom to follow our foolishness? Secondly, if thou refusest this cross and affliction, reflect that for an absolute certainty thou wilt have to sustain a heavier one from the devil. For on this account the Lord hath said, “Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you; for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Therefore the

The way
pointed out
of God is
patience.

Resignation
necessary.

The cross of
Christ, or of
the devil, must
be borne.

wicked mourn in hell that they have walked through difficult ways, and sustained the most heavy tyranny of this world¹. Thirdly, consider that Impatience of no avail. all men are born under this law, that they are to suffer adversities, and that thou art struggling against it in vain; for the Lord Himself saith, It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou^k? If therefore thou canst not escape, why art thou troubled, and increasing thy grief and thine evil? For God indeed thou canst not injure; but if thou wouldst injure thy neighbour He Himself will avenge it, Who saith, Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay; so much so that he who only says to his neighbour, Thou fool, shall be liable to everlasting fire. Is not this sufficient for thee?

FOURTH POINT.

CONSIDER, first of all, whether when thou perceivest in thyself pride and impatience thou art willing to be healed? Yes, certainly, Adversities are a medicine. thou sayest: admit therefore the hand of the physician, give thanks unto Him Who assisteth thee to subdue those wild In them turn to God. beasts and to extinguish that fire: for neither can patience be acquired without those exercises, nor humility without humiliation. But thy property, it may be, is taken from thee, thine office, or character and reputation; but by whom? by God unto Whom it belonged, while thou secretly wert worshipping it as an idol with great affection. And if thou knowest not how great that affection to this object hath been, it may be inferred from the greatness of the grief which thou feelest at the loss in thy mind, only because thou shalt not be able to commit fornication, as Scripture expresses it, and serve that thine idol. What, when God and heavenly things may be present with thee, wilt thou cling as the beetle to the dung-hill? Thou oughtest to be praying for pardon, for having adhered with too great love to the creature, which is to commit spiritual fornication; and, lo, thou The creatures are idols. art grieving because it is not further allowed thee, and art complaining of God, the true Spouse of thy soul. O the shamelessness! thou art daring to seek for that, by which thou mayst offend Him, and depart from Him; and if in His mercy He denies this, art bearing it impatiently, because He permits not any longer for injury to be done Him by thee, from thy love of the creature. Surely it were but becoming to suppress such grief, at least on the occasion of evil, that is of adultery, being taken from thee;—to give thanks rather for a snare being removed and a pitfall closed up. O miserable condition,

¹ Wisdom v. 7.^k Isaiah xlv. 9.

not to be able to dislike what is hurtful; not to be able to will that which is profitable!

FIFTH POINT.

Go over the mysteries of the Passion. First of all the straitness and anguish of heart of the most lovely Jesus; and join thine own sorrows with them, and thus united, offer them up to the Divine majesty. In the next place, consider what it is thou art suffering, from whom, and how, whether in person, limbs, or character and reputation, and to each of these reflections say, What reward shall I give unto Thee, my King and my God, I who am the most worthless of slaves, for all the benefits that Thou hast done unto me? Is it not just that I should put my trust in Thee, Who hast done so great things unto me? and that I should bear something for my own salvation, when Thou hast deigned to endure so much for it? Secondly, attend to this consideration, that our Lord, infinitely wise and good, hath chosen the Cross for Himself and for His own; do thou therefore say, I ought also to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me. Thirdly, consider the providence of a most kind Father towards thee, and that from all eternity He hath provided and determined this cross for thee, according to all the circumstances of place, time, persons; and with the very greatest goodness and wisdom hath measured out for thee this thy cross, in proportion to thy strength, thy complexion and character, so that if thou wilt, to thee also, as to them that love God, all things shall work together for good¹. But He hath chosen this man or that by means of whom He might exercise or punish thee; why is this not agreeable to thee? look not unto him that beareth it, but to Him that sendeth it unto thee. For there is no evil in the city, but what the Lord hath done. Fourthly, consider the eternal weight of glory which will be the recompense of momentary tribulation;—and, as the Apostle says, that we have need of patience for all things in order that we may receive the promise^m, and possess our souls in peace. Therefore with a generous mind commit thyself unto the Divine providence for time and for eternity; and take care to will that which God wills. For otherwise thou canst will nothing that will be profitable to thee; for all that can be profitable to us is our God alone, and His pleasure. Abide therefore in Him, and be all thy enjoyment in Him; Who is every where present; and Who is in Himself every good; and then thou never canst complain, for he alone complains who is in want of some good. And, lo, if thou

Consideration of the Passion.

Reflect on the providence of God in evils.

Resignation necessary.

¹ Rom. viii. 28.

^m Heb. x. 36.

wilt, thou hast all things in thy God, if by thy will and affection thou art joined unto Him; for in this all the Law and the Prophets is contained; in this consisteth true love, and the perfection of love.

Exercise.

O Eternal Wisdom, which reachest from one end to another mightily, and sweetly dost order all things^a, hast Thou not said by Thy Prophet, Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it^o? Hast Thou not said Thyself, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered? Do not
Trust in the *Thine eyes look upon us continually? Art not Thou our Father,*
providence of *and most full of love towards us; our Creator, and our Pre-*
our eternal *server? Is it not in Thee we live and move and have our being,*
Father. *we and all things that are? Not a leaf is stirred upon its tree without Thy providence, not a sparrow falleth to the ground without it. What then if this or that mishap befall me? shall I like a dog turn upon the stone that wounds me, and shall I not lift up mine eyes to Thee Whose doing it is, and Who out of Thine immeasurable love sendest it upon me? Oftentimes I pray Thee, O Lord, for patience, why therefore am I unwilling to acquire it by the ordinary course? I would fain be patient in suffering, and am I then unwilling to suffer? Alas, what sort of member is this of Thy most Holy Body, O Lord Jesus? what sort, and how deformed an one! Thou wast wounded for my transgressions^p, and from the sole of Thy foot even unto the crown of Thy head there was no soundness in Thee^q, that I might be sound, and do I refuse to suffer for mine own transgressions? O Lord, Thou seest my imperfection^r, and if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole, and why shouldst Thou not will? can my evil overcome Thy goodness?*
Application *Not so; it cannot be, for lo, Thou art ready even this day to*
to the Com- *come, that Thou mayst heal, and feed, and give me drink, and em-*
munion. *brace me, and make me like unto Thyself. Do unto me, I beseech Thee, according to Thy mercy. I put myself into Thine hand, as clay in the hand of the potter, and resign myself unto Thee in time and in eternity: only this I ask, that Thou cast me not away, neither despise me, O God my Saviour. Thou, Lord, didst learn patience and obedience by the things that Thou didst suffer^s, and shall I refuse all hardships? that were in sooth to be a dastard soldier.*

Thou for my sake wast crowned upon the hard Cross, and wast scourged;

^a Wisdom viii. 1.

^p Isaiah liii. 5.

^r Psalm cxxxix. 16. Vulg.

^o Amos iii. 6.

^q Isaiah i. 6.

^s Heb. v. 8.

and shall I seek to have all soft and easy? Thou didst suffer hunger, shall I desire to pamper the belly? Thou didst choose shame and reproach, shall I be so mad as to look for glory? Thou in all things didst choose things hard and vile and rugged, and so too did all Thy Saints, but I, led not by Thy Spirit, but by the spirit of the flesh and of the world, must study forsooth mine own advantage! didst not Thou know, O sweetest Jesu, to refuse the evil and choose the good? if there be evil in the Cross and in affliction, wouldst Thou have chosen them? Wouldst Thou have pledged the cup of suffering unto Thy Mother, and Thy loving Saints, who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, through the desert of this life, that they might come unto the true land of promise? but I, how do I wish to find another way, than Thou, Eternal Wisdom, hast chosen? Doth Thy counsel, O my God, please me not? did it behove Thee to suffer and so to enter into Thy glory? on what terms then shall I enter thereinto, except by the King's high road of the holy Cross? Wheresoever I go, wheresoever I flee, escape the Cross I cannot any way, compassed as I am with a thousand ills; but this alone I do, things which would be sweet, if I received them kindly from Thine hand, (for Thou hast said, I am with him in trouble,) now from my self-will and rebellious heart become sharp and unbearable.

Christ chose
hard things
for Himself
and His own,
what dost
thou choose?

The need of
resignation.

What wilt Thou make of me, O good Jesu? is it not certain, that except I suffer with Thee, neither can I reign with Thee? why then do I hate and turn away from those who weave my crown, who either unawares, or to their own great damage, damage so great as to be pitied even in an enemy, work it for me? Lo, they offer me medicine for my sins, and arms to repel mine enemies withal; but I, good Jesu, will not receive them, but, like a madman, love those who cherish mine enemies, and turn away from those who war against them; nor am ashamed, alas, in words to call myself a Christian, and as it were in deeds deny it. O most loving Jesu, canst Thou bear such an one in Thy service, who shrinks from Thy Cross, as from an evil spirit? who loves not those that persecute him, nor prays for them, nor does them good, but like an heathen and a publican, loves those only that love him, and hates those that hate him, as even the very wild beasts will do: and though Thou dost command us to love our enemies, and settest such mighty rewards before us, alas! with many, behold, one peaceable word, or some cheap compliance from a neighbour, is of more avail than all Thy will: for the sake of those they will forgive him, for the sake of this they will not pardon so much as a little word.

Lo, I confess mine offences unto Thee, and most humbly, by Thy pains, and weariness, and sorrows, and wounds unnumbered, and reproaches, I implore Thy grace, that I may learn to love mine enemies, to welcome adver-

sities as sent by Thee, through many tribulations sent by Thy providence at length to be saved, and to stand amongst Thy friends, Martyrs most valiant, renowned for so many sufferings, amongst Confessors, and Virgins also ennobled by Thy Cross, and enjoy Thee to all eternity. I resign Oblation of self. me to Thy Providence, dispose of Thy creature. Do with this nothing, what Thou pleasest, O my Lord, the God of my heart; for what do I know what is best for me? Thou art the Physician of my soul, Thou knowest what is best for me: Thou, my Guide, knowest which way Thou art leading me; Thou, O my Father, wilt not I know cast off, or despise, or forsake me; neither by Thy grace will I Thee: with Thee, good Jesu, I desire to die, and to conquer, and to cleave unto Thee to all eternity. Amen.

A METHOD OF EXERCISING PATIENCE UNDER OUR OWN EVILS.

SEE adversities beforehand; every morning, when thou examinest thyself, yea rather every hour, to provide for adversities which might happen unto thee, and to prepare thy mind against them.

Secondly, when an occasion for exercising patience offers, to raise thine eyes to heaven unto God, and to give thanks, and placing thyself in thought before Christ crucified, to embrace Him. Refrain therefore from words, and let anger die within thee, neither afterwards relate to any one, nor make greater than it is an injury thy neighbour has done thee; for that were to aggravate it, and to stir thyself up through the subtilty of the devil unto revenge; but as being truly humble, thou oughtest to extenuate his fault, as really no injury, being done to one who has been the enemy of God and so often injurious to Him.

Thirdly, if thou feelest aught of bitterness, anticipate thy neighbour, by some third person, at least, if thou canst not otherwise; first, humbling thyself unto him, though the fault is his; secondly, by doing him some benefit; thirdly, at all events, pray for him. Some there be, who shun all sight and converse of their neighbour out of their aversion and hatred towards him. Wilt not Thou, out of their own mouth and deed, judge them, O Lord? Alas! I fear that they shall never see Thy face in joy! Some refuse to be the first to humble themselves, as though it were a degradation; when the Lord humbled Himself, and He who did no sin offered Himself to be numbered with the transgressors. What? do you wish to be thought incapable of doing wrong, and more than man? Beware lest thou fall as the apostate Angel, and like one of the princes.

Fourthly, offer thyself daily in Holy Offices unto all tribulations, to receive them from whomsoever and whensoever they come as from His hand, and when received refer them day by day unto Him, and pray for them that persecute thee.

Behold God present and embrace the Crucified.
Anticipate thy neighbour by kind offices.
In Communion resign thyself unto God.

Ejaculations.

"Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. 6.

"I am Christ's wheat, may I be so ground by wild beasts' teeth that I may be found at last pure bread." St. Ignatius, Martyr.

"It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy statutes."
Psalm cxix. 71.

"I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled." Psalm cxix. 75.

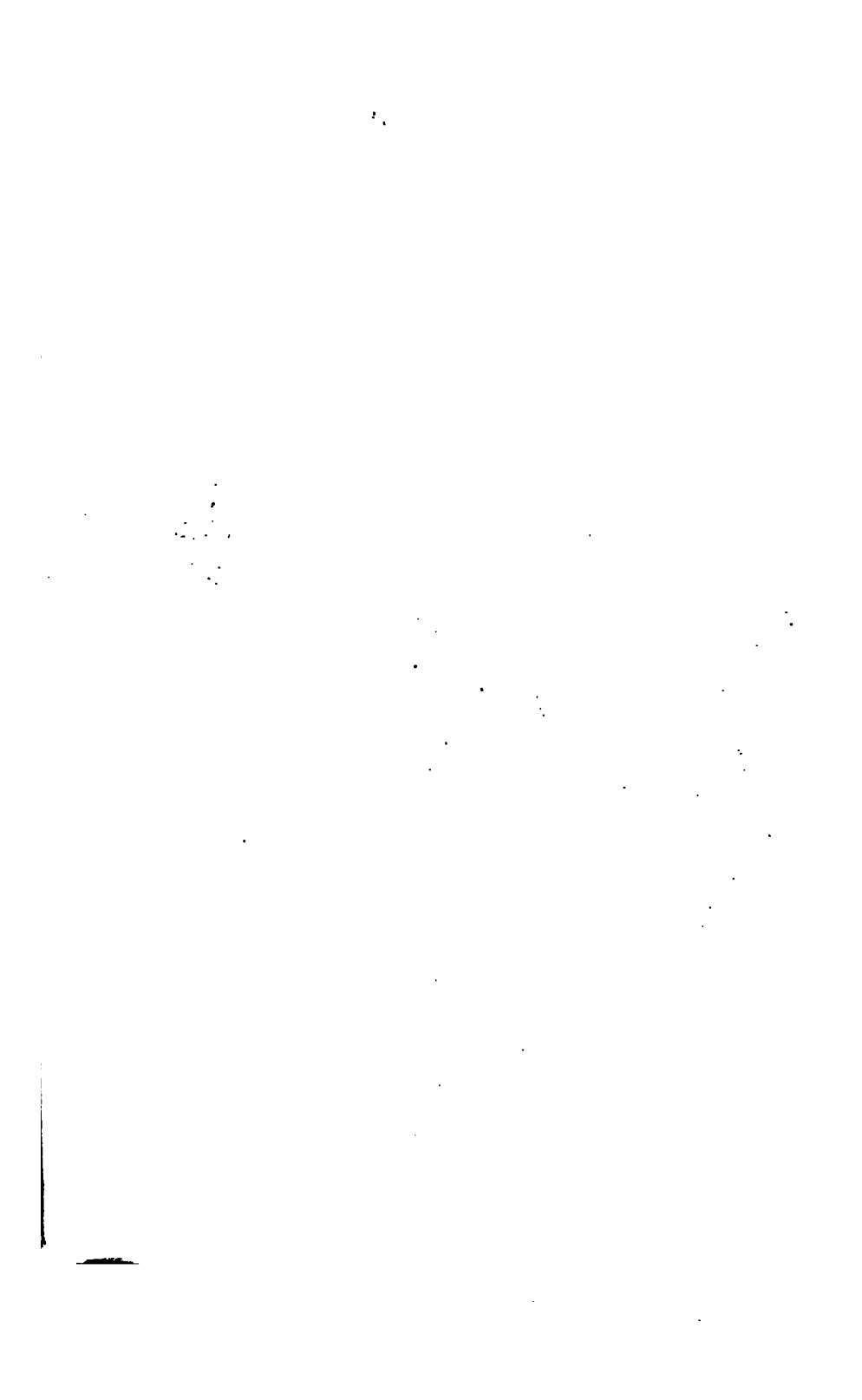
"Thou hast been my succour; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." Psalm xxvii. 11.

IMAGE THE NINTH.

DEATH APPROACHES, LIFE FLIES : O PILGRIM, WHY DOST THOU LOITER ?

Consider the Time of thy life (A) how uncertain it is, how short, and swift. This is represented by the person of an Aged man ; because at every moment time is being renewed, grows aged, glides away, and dies. Make use of it therefore, as soon about to pass away. The hour-glass (B) denotes its rapid flight, and on this hour and thread of life Eternity depends, into which Death is hurrying men while they think not of it. The emblem which describes eternity among the ancients is the serpent forming a circle ; for it hath neither beginning nor end ; and this is hanging on the thread of our frail life. And this life in the meanwhile is flying away like the smoke (C), the bubble, the arrow, the ship, the river, the bird, the stag, and the vernal flower. We are cut down like the grass (D), and are extinguished like the candle (E) by the least breath of wind. We must watch therefore, for the axe (F) is laid at the root of the Tree. He who is wise will give heed to these things and live ; and will do every thing at each hour, as if it were the last, as the Angel admonishes him to do (G). And with good cause indeed, for it is to be followed by a blessed or a miserable Eternity (H) : which is denoted by the palm-branch and the flaming sword on the circle.





Meditation

CONCERNING DEATH AND THE FLEETNESS OF LIFE.

I. CONTEMPLATE those things which are set before thee in the foregoing Image.

II. Ask for grace, that thou mayst be able to afford diligent heed to the time and occasion, which are now offered thee.

FIRST POINT.

O TRAVELLER! seest thou where thou standest, how thy life vanisheth away,—what an eternity awaits thee! I beseech thee, how canst thou put off thy conversion, even for a moment? thou whom eternity is waiting for, whom the most Holy Trinity is beholding, together with the whole court of heaven! Observe, how all things around thee melt away; look on and consider this life, riches, honours, pleasures, how they fly away like a ship, like a river, like a bird, an arrow, the smoke, and the flowers. This is by Solomon elegantly expressed—“All those things,” saith he, (speaking in the person of the ungodly,) “are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by: and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves; or as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found; or like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through;—even so we, in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end. For the hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the wind, like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm; like as the smoke which is dispersed here and there with a tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day.” Therefore, while we have time, let us work that which is good—and let us walk while we have light, lest the darkness overtake us,—and so, when the door is shut, we hear that sad saying, “I know you not.”

Consider again what remains to thee of past periods of time, of years, months, and all transitory things, after they have once passed away? Surely nothing, but the sad or the cheerful remembrance of things well done or ill done, and eternity. Wherefore determine thou whether of these two thou wouldst have for ever, from this present hour, and in what manner thou oughtest to pray, to behave thyself, and live. Surely no wise man would wish to enjoy feastings, recreation, honour, for one short hour only, rather than in eternity.

SECOND POINT.

CALL to mind the sudden calamities which have befallen those, with whom thou wert acquainted in times past: and then reflect and weigh it well, that the same may befall thee and any one else, as befel the other, and set every hour before thine eyes, as if it were the last. "Every day (saith Cæsarius) should be so ordered, as if the last;" do thou apply this rule to each hour also. And since it is to thee a matter of uncertainty, in what place death waits for thee, do thou wait for him in every place. For true it is, as Cyprian saith, that as God shall find thee when He calleth thee, so will thy judgment be, and so on one hour depends a long, long eternity! Believeest thou this, O man? and believing, dost thou not tremble all over?

If a person were shut up in prison, and with others condemned to death, when he saw now one, now another, summoned from beside him to execution, he would not amuse himself with play, but would look seriously to his own condition—do thou act in the same way. Or supposing he had to end his life by poison, and seven loaves of bread were given him for seven days, one of which had poison mixed up in it; what would be his feelings (think you?) from day to day when he took his bread? Or if a person were admitted to a feast where there were so many dishes and one full of deadly ingredients, how would the thought of death fill him with horror at the touch of any of them. Do thou clothe thyself with the same temper, and "Live each day as if thy last," or rather not "each day" but "each hour," that so all which thou doest may be free from sin. According to that saying of Thomas Aquinas: God's way of dealing (saith he) is different from ours; for "every thing that He made, behold! it was very good;" in like manner ought we to apply all diligence, that all we do may be, to the uttermost of our power, better than what we did before—through the full power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with all the desire of the Church militant and triumphant, and in the Name of the Creator: as though our whole salvation, and all the praise of God, and the welfare of the universe,

depended on one single work : as though we never should return again to that work, nor enter on any other work any more for ever. For how do mortal men fall down, as it were in crowds, on every side of us, pierced through with Death's arrows ! Do thou then tremble at the thought of Death, who is every hour ready to seize thee, and make the best use of each present opportunity, which, when once past, can never return any more.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER what opportunities thou now hast of doing what is right and good, and how thou hast been inwardly moved to turn them to account. For even granting that life may be prolonged, yet there is no certainty that the time shall be prolonged also, wherein the LORD will remember us. Inasmuch as, after the Lord, by giving an opportunity, hath called us, if we pay no regard thereto, then will He justly pay no regard to us. "I have called," saith He, "and ye refused ; I stretched out My hand and no man regarded ; I also will laugh at your destruction." For what can be more merited ? what more just ? as we will not hear, so we are not heard ; as we will pay no regard, so we are not regarded. "He that is of God," saith the Truth itself, "heareth God's words ; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." If then thou dost not hearken to God when He so admonisheth thee, thou hast reason to fear that thou art not of God. But hear thou Samuel, thus denouncing his threatenings against Saul : "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." But that person surely seems to "reject the word of the Lord," who prepares not himself as he ought to hear the voice of God,—who sets himself indolently to prayer and works of piety, and thus renders himself unfit to receive the divine inspirations, which at that time the Lord would have vouchsafed to grant to him, and by which perhaps, and in no other way, he would have attained to Salvation. For He saith, "I have heard thee in an accepted time," and our days have been numbered not only with regard to this temporal life, but also with respect to that which is eternal.

We must
obey God's
call.

A Prayer

TO BE ENABLED TO PERFECT OUR ACTIONS WITH PIETY
AND UPRIGHTNESS.

O King of kings, and Lord of lords, Thou hast numbered our days which cannot be exceeded, and lo ! Thou hast granted to me these —— years'

space for repentance. But how long shall this period be? Thou knowest, O most merciful Jesu! how many the days of Thy servant are—and when Thou wilt pass judgment on me,—Thou knowest, and I am content. I know that “it is not for me to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power,” my Saviour, blessed be Thou for evermore. But my part is, to “redeem the time, because our days are few and evil;” and inasmuch as, when it is once passed, no price can redeem it, no pains or diligence recover it, with the utmost humility I beseech Thee, O Thou Life of my soul, that Thou wouldst grant me power to redeem the time, seeing Thou hast purchased me at a great price. Grant that I may work out my salvation while it is yet light. But what other can that be, save Thee the True Light, which enlightenest every man, that he may come unto Thee? I will therefore, from this time forth, walk in this manner, ——— before Thee, whilst I have light, and so will I ascend unto Thee. For behold! Thou, O Bread of Angels, art become the Bread of me a Pilgrim, that so I may walk in the strength of that meat unto Horeb the mount of my God, and to Thy most soothing embraces. I rise therefore with Elias, for a great journey is before me, ere I can come to Thee to Whom I aspire.

Application
to Commu-
nion.

But how many shall the days be in which I shall be able to purchase Thy kingdom with one word? in which I can earn Thy grace, and buy from Thee for myself Thy lore, which is as gold tried in the fire? Alas! when once this moment, this hour of pilgrimage, wherein it is yet possible for me to be reconciled to Thee, shall have passed by, too well I know it can never again be recovered. Where are they now, my equals in age, the companions of my childhood, friends and acquaintance ———? Death, early or late, hath taken them away,—and yet to all appearance they might have promised themselves many years of life, as being either young in days, or strong in constitution. But as they learnt how unexpected Thy coming is, so have they taught me, that I too ought to be prepared, at this present hour and at all hours. Am I then prepared, or not? and have I on me the marriage-garment of Thy love? Surely, O Lord, through Thy grace I do with desire desire to love Thee, to cleave to Thee, to be one with Thee. Do Thou have mercy on me, and hearken to this desire of Thy poor servant, wherewith I desire to welcome Thee with all the tender affection of which I am capable; and do Thou enable me so to order my life and discourse and all my actions, as though all my salvation, and all Thine honour, and the welfare of the universe, were dependent on each thing that I do;—as though I should never return to this work any more,—as though I should never enter on any other. It is therefore my earnest wish in this manner ——— to “walk before Thee and be perfect” that I may find grace in Thine eyes. Is it not the time for shewing mercy, O Lord, is not the time yet come?

Call to mind therefore the multitude of loving-kindnesses which in times past Thou hast bestowed on me——, and let Thy mercies speedily overtake us. Behold, already the day declineth, the night is fast drawing on, when no man shall any longer be able to work—Yea, the night cometh, but it whispereth also of the approach of that eternal day when there shall be no evening, when I shall see Thee, O blessed Jesu! my only desire. O when wilt Thou come, Thou Sun of righteousness, my only Hope, and Confidence, and Life? Come, O come quickly, and tarry no longer: forgive Thou the sins of Thy people, set me free from the body of this death, that henceforth I may serve Thee in holiness and righteousness, and may die and live for ever for Thee, Who livedst and diedst for me, and dost now live and wait for me, until Thou grant to me the great reward, even Thine own Self. Amen.

RULES FOR PRACTICE.

FIRST, place thyself sometimes on some commanding height, and then call to mind what the wise man so beautifully saith^a, on the vanity of human things. Look on the town below thee, and think how many mortal men have lived there—and now where are they? And thoughts such as these are more touching, if some ancient ruins are there in sight, and the fortunes of great cities are presented to the eye, and to the mind. Think of these things, and regulate thine own life accordingly.

Secondly, keep a catalogue of thy former friends and acquaintances, especially of any great persons, whom in their life-time thou wert wont to look up to with reverence—and then see what man is, and what are his works; ask (as it were) of these persons what their opinion now is of this world's things.

Thirdly, every week or every month run over in thy thoughts the time past of thy life; think of the many dangers which thou hast escaped through God's mercy, and learn for the time to come to be the more thoughtful and devout.

Fourthly, let a man reckon over what opportunities for the exercise of piety he has had in times past, or still has,—especially when he comes to look back on others, and considering a map of the world, he observes that the greatest part of its inhabitants are perishing either in ignorance or in wickedness.

Fifthly, let us sometimes narrowly consider our behaviour during Divine Service, specially during some solemn Day, and put it closely to our consciences whether in the hour of death we would not wish we had behaved ourselves differently. This consideration is most useful, as well to enlighten the understanding as to inflame the will.

Sixthly, oftentimes when we are in doubt how we should act, if we would have our mind free from passion and prejudice, it is well that we think what

^a Wisdom v.

we should wish to have done, if this were the very hour of our death. **Think on thy last hour in every action.** Surely in this way a person would have no difficulty in persuading himself, e. g. to forgive an enemy, to shake off sloth, to take every opportunity of receiving the Blessed Sacrament, of unburdening his conscience. Only in the regulation of our actions, this is particularly to be observed, that due limits should be assigned to them, not only as **Order all thine actions.** regards the manner of their performance, but also as to the time: that so we "provide things honest, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men."

Seventhly, Consider that sentiment of St. Thomas before quoted, for it is indeed most edifying; remember especially that we endeavour to accomplish the most important actions of life with the greatest perfectness.

Exhortations.

THINK of the multitudes of souls who in this very hour perish everlastingly: and then say with the deepest sense of thy condition,

"O shut not up my soul with the sinners, nor my life with the blood-thirsty."

Psalm xxvi. 9.

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" Psalm viii. 4.

"Remember, Lord, that my life is wind."

"Wilt Thou break a leaf driven to and fro?"

"Wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?" Job xiii. 25.

"I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave." Isaiah xxxviii. 10.

"Thou hast been my succour; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." Psalm xxvii. 9.

Meditation

ON THE ACCURATE DISTRIBUTION AND KEEPING ACCOUNT OF TIME.

IN like manner as thou beholdest in the universe that all things are defined by their own times and seasons, in weight, and number, and measure; and that with the very greatest accuracy: such also should be the case with thee and in thine own little world, that the very greatest account should be made of time; and that thou shouldst carefully measure out thy life and its portions accordingly. And this is no mean safeguard to piety.

For the place of Meditation, consider thyself as in a vast solitude con-

templating the exquisitely-ordered motions of the heavens, and how all things are passing on with exceeding swiftness, so that after single moments of time nothing is recoverable of those that once have been for all eternity.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER first of all the ordering and will of God, according to which He hath willed that all created things here should rise and set each in its own time, that their periods should be defined with the very greatest accuracy, and their signs; and imitate them as much as thou canst. Secondly, how uncertain the time of our life is, and how short, if it be compared with long—long eternity! Thirdly, that every single moment an eternal weight of glory or of punishment approaches nearer and nearer unto thee.

The short-
ness, the
uncertain-
ty, the va-
lue of time.

For good deeds shall be crowned with eternity; and in those who shall be found reprobate even light sins shall be eternally punished. Fourthly, see how great is the care of the children of this world in all matters of merchandize, in every opportunity of any profit; how men rise early, spend their whole day in toils, pass over seas, and are prodigal of life; and what art thou doing? Consider fifthly, that of all things time is the most precious and irrecoverable: but, alas! as Bernard saith, nothing is more precious than time, and yet nothing in this day is held more cheap.

Days, months, and years of salvation pass by, and no one re- flects; no one takes it to heart and makes account with himself

Life is a mer-
chandize.

that he has lost a day, and that it never can again return. But only observe why it is so precious; because, forsooth, by it we are able to buy all things, without it nothing. If, moreover, a man could give the whole world for prolonging the time of his life at his death, although it were but for one moment, yet by no means could he procure it. Now seriously dwell upon this point. How highly, do you think, would they that are lost, and they that are blessed, now value it, if they could have again restored to them one hour of life;

The lost shew
the value of
time.

the one to attain their salvation, the other to increase their glory! And therefore it is that Eternal Wisdom exclaims, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" O that man did but know how much in this time of life he might increase the goods of his soul. What shall we say of the things which even heathen philosophers thought and expressed concerning time; among these Zeno used to say, that there is nothing men are so much in need of as time; Democritus, that of all things we spend, the most precious is time; Seneca, Take care therefore, my dear Lucilius, act up to thyself, collect and preserve thy time. For where is the man

thou wilt give me, who shall fix any price upon time, and tell me the value of a day? Weigh therefore seriously in what manner thou makest use of thy time, on what matter thou expendest that which is the most precious of all things, what it is that thou receivest in exchange for it; perhaps idle tales, ease, or amusement; when thou mightest acquire kingdoms by means of it, mightest increase the grace of God, assist thy neighbours, and by good works make thy calling sure.

SECOND POINT.

REFLECT, O my brother, above all things, on how little time yet remains to thee, and how much thou hast already lost. Secondly, on how thou wouldst lay out that which is left thee. Elegant certainly is the admonition of Seneca, Let us so make up our mind, he says, as if we were come to the last day; let us defer nothing, for he who every day sets the crowning hand on his life hath no need of time. "See then," saith the Apostle, "that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, How time is to be spent. deeming the time, because the days are evil." But our laying it out must be upon our salvation, for to this end God hath bestowed it: and if we shall not have done this, a severe reckoning will be made with us. Attentively observe therefore how much time thou

Well note this! assignest daily to exercises of devotion: and whether thou dost fully portion out what time is due to these, and to attendance upon God: or most foolishly bestowest only thy leisure time on these, and thy best on other employments. Moreover, whether thou couldst make no improvement in thy way of spending it. What merchant-man is there, let me ask, who on the day of his merchandize will purchase nothing but a little worthless straw, when Life our market day; Buy the best. he might buy gold, goodly pearls, yea a kingdom? Thirdly, seriously consider what good thou mightst do in one hour, what in one day, what in a few weeks by constantly pursuing it, and what advance thou mightst make in the study of holiness: think of this and blush: especially if thou wilt but notice the incredible diligence of worldly men, which they bestow on the most worthless matters.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER what great madness is it to be making an accurate reckoning of all things which appertain to thy domestic concerns Account to be kept of time. (and here thou mayst go through the particular instances of the same) and yet to neglect time the most precious of all things, and to expend it upon base and empty objects. Secondly, how great the incon-

veniences which thou hast experienced from this remissness, and which many do experience, who have never any settled course of action, but are carried on by mere chance or accident, as if in a boat which has no certain haven.

Exercise

FOR KEEPING ACCOUNT OF TIME.

Alas! what is man, O my Creator? what is the life of man? what is his time? how short and precious to the wise man, of how little worth to the fool! and yet on this or that moment hangs my eternal, eternal, eternal happiness or misery! Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. For behold, at midnight shall there be a cry made, as I hear from Thee, and concerning Thee, O good Jesus, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him. I go out, and go forth from my country, and the love of earthly things, from my kindred and the pleasures of sense, and my father's house, that I may find Thee, and fervently kiss Thee, whilst Thou art still without the doors, and enfold Thee in the midst of my heart. "O that Thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find Thee without I would kiss thee; yea I should not be despised^b." I deny myself that I may follow Thee from this moment with my whole heart.

Application
to Commu-
nion.

I implore Thee, draw me after Thee, and give Thyself to me, and raise me up. For behold, now I have left all things, and follow Thee: what therefore shall be given to me, or what do I seek? Thee, O Lord Jesus, Thee Alone, whilst Thou mayst be found, and most bitterly do I grieve for my sins, and with the deepest love do I follow, and kiss the prints of Thy feet. I wish, most heartily do I wish, that I were able to say from my heart, Surely the Lord is in this place, in this place of my heart, and I knew it not; or with Peter^c, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent His Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of my enemies! Would that I could understand, O Lord my God, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature, was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, that is, in Thee, O Lord^d. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory^e; for the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves

^b Cant. viii. 1.

^d Rom. viii. 18—20.

^c Acts xii. 11.

^e 2 Cor. iv. 17.

also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body^f, and for Thy most earnestly wished for, and anxiously desired Coming. When wilt Thou come and comfort me, O Thou Who art my Light, my Hope?

O when will appear that day of eternity, in which we shall see that these single moments have fixed that eternity! when we shall greatly rejoice in Thee, though now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness, that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ^g. O how precious will our time then appear to have been with which eternity, and Thou Who art all Good, couldst be attained; how short the hour of our life, how brief our labour, how precious every fourth part of an hour, which now so often is lost in idleness, in wickedness, in foolish talk!

How great
the loss of
time.

A word passes away and cannot be again recalled, time passes away and cannot be again spent: nor does the foolish man observe what he is losing; we are at full liberty, says he, to talk and amuse ourselves for an hour:—alas, until that hour pass away which the compassion of thy Creator mercifully grants thee to practise repentance, to obtain pardon, to acquire grace, to purchase glory; till that time shall have gone by in which thou mayst propitiate the Divine mercy, mayst hasten to the society of Angels, mayst sigh after thy lost inheritance, mayst stir up the remissness of thy will, mayst weep over the wickedness thou hast done. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven^h; now is the time for weeping, hereafter will be the time of laughing; now is the time of mourning, hereafter will be the time of dancing: now is the time of war, hereafter will be the time of peace; now is the time to hate (for except a man hate his own life, he cannot be Thy disciple, O most lovely Jesus), but hereafter will be the time to love. Yea, the time is even now come, for Thy love goeth forth from the uttermost part of the Heaven, and there is no one who may hide himself from the heat thereof. Would that henceforth even for ever I might love Thee with my whole heart, and hate myself! Would that I might love nothing but Thee! Would that Thou wert All in All to me, and that I might praise Thy great Name for ever and ever. Amen.

RULES FOR KEEPING ACCOUNT OF TIME.

FIRST of all consider what are the most suitable times to thee for the affairs thou hast to do, but above all things for transacting the business of thy salvation; and take diligent heed that thou bestow not the ^{Salvation our} first care. best of thy time on matters of no account, whilst thou art giving to prayer and

^f Rom. viii. 22, 23.

^g 1 Peter i. 6, 7.

^h Eccles. iii. 1.

the business of thy soul that time which is unsuitable for them. So, alas! do we see it daily happen, that the best part of life, the best part of the day, is given to the world and vanity; while an enfeebled body, and the more worthless times of old age are assigned to religion. Affairs of state are carried on in the flower of age, the business of the soul in life's decline. Which then is of the most importance to thee, to be saved, or to be a good citizen? Let each one, therefore, portion out for himself his years, his days, his hours; nor pass his life as mere chance directs, but according to a settled purpose. He is to be numbered amongst the idle and slothful who only does right when an opportunity for doing so offers itself. But time should be so divided, that first of all we attend to those things which are matters of bounden obligation; such as belong to our salvation, to the worship of God, to prayer, to Holy Communion, to pious reading, to examination of the conscience. Secondly, we should attend to those duties which are next to these in importance, such as those which belong to our station and duties in life, our trade and labour; for man is born to labour, as a bird for flying. Thirdly, to the concerns of our family. Fourthly, to proper recreation, for nothing is durable which hath not its returns of alternate rest.

How life
should be
regulated.

Secondly, you should take account of time spent month by month, and consider whether you could not lay it out in better occupation and more fruitful of good. For occupations are various, some are of the soul, such as prayer, different kinds of study, reading; others are of the body, such as the practice of mechanical arts, also riding, hunting, wrestling, and recreation; others consist in the management of domestic concerns, such as planting, building in moderation, repairs; others are state affairs; another there is which is the most weighty of all, and that is the preparation for death. For hither all things tend and must be directed, days, years, periods of time, and every action.

Take a
monthly
account of
time.

Preparation
for death.

Exhortations.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Let us cast off, therefore, the works of darkness." 2 Cor. vi. 2; Rom. xiii. 12.

"Brethren, now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Rom. xiii. 11.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccles. ix. 10.

"I must work while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." John ix. 4.

"Walk whilst ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John xii. 35.

IMAGE THE TENTH.

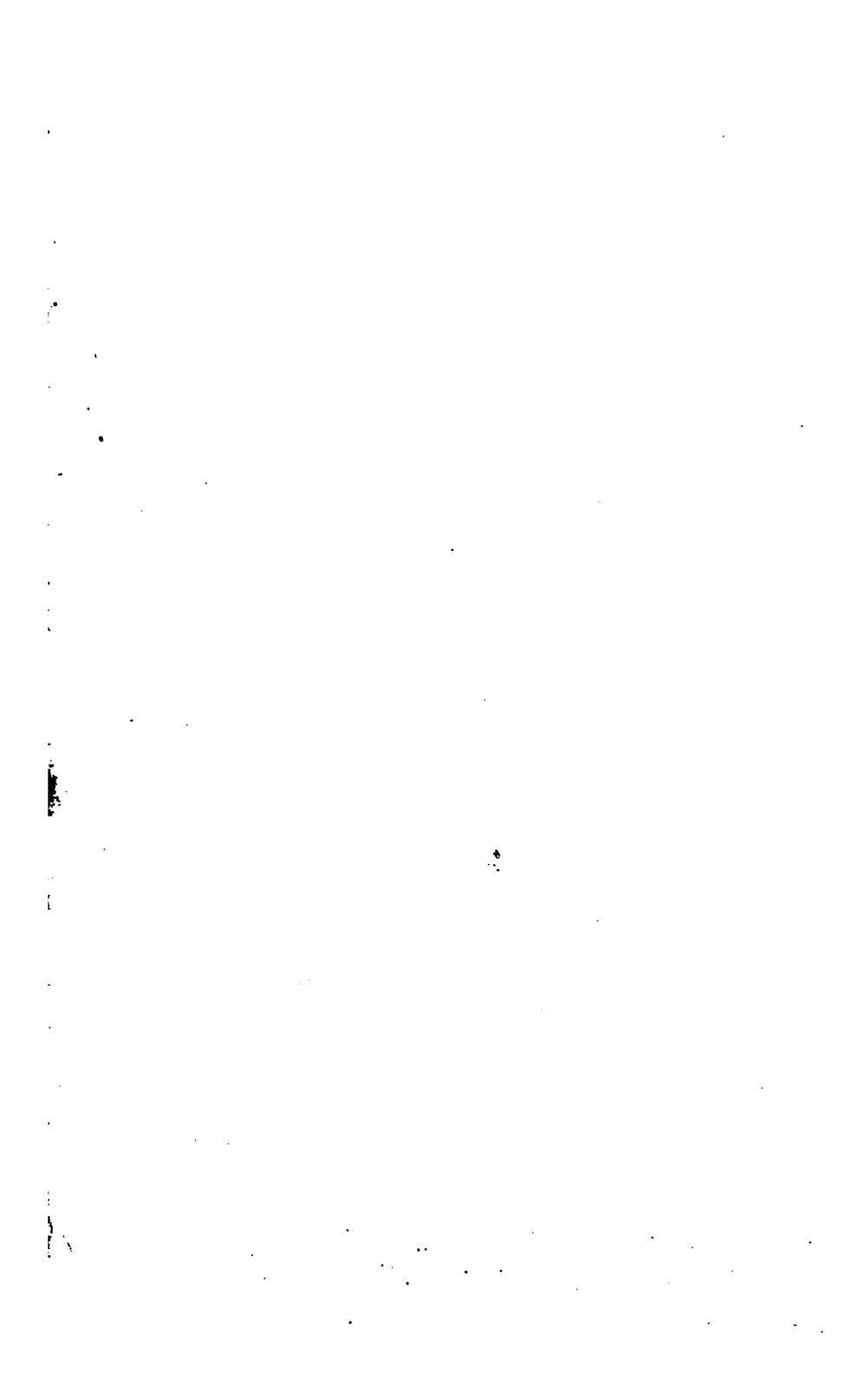
BEHOLD, I PRAY THEE, THE DANGERS THAT BESET THEE, AND FLEE TO
THE ASYLUM OF DEVOTION AND PRAYER.

Consider how the World (A), the Devil (B), and Sin (C), together with Death (D), are pursuing thee ; and flee for refuge to the crucified Jesus (E), Who most lovingly inviteth all unto Him, saying, " Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Betake thee also unto Prayer (F) and the presence of God, as an asylum and place of refuge. Thus did the great Antony (G) and very many other Saintly men triumph over their enemies with the arms of prayer. By the same did Moses (H) overcome the Amalekites. Imitate these, and with vast strides press thou forward unto Christ and the imitation of Him. For " whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

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Meditation

ON THE DANGERS OF THIS LIFE, WHICH IS ANOTHER INCENTIVE TO THE FEAR OF GOD.

FOR the place of thy meditation consider thyself in that scene which is portrayed in the accompanying Image.

FIRST POINT.

IN the first place, consider that thou art surrounded on every side by enemies, the world, the devil, the flesh, and sin with its many opportunities; and that there is no place or time that they cease to pursue thee, even unto the death. Believest thou this? What then art thou about to do? Secondly, that these thine enemies are most powerful, most wily, and most wicked, and that thou art not able to overcome even one of them without the especial protection and grace of God. Thirdly, call to mind how sin thrust down the Angels from heaven, and afterwards cast Adam out of Paradise; although they were created in a state of Grace, and were compassed about and entrenched, if I may so speak, with infinite safeguards. Apply therefore thy whole endeavour to receive the darts of the enemy on the shield of prayer and of faith, and so to quench them. O Lord God of hosts we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee ^a.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER the falls of good men, who seemed to be pillars of Heaven and of the Church of God, after they had lived for many years in holiness and piety: such was the case with Hosius, Lucifer of Cagliari, Origen, Tertullian, and so many of sacred and religious orders who apostatized from religion, and their own most holy calling, and very often even from the faith itself. O the judgments

Reflect on
falls of good
men.

^a 2 Chron. xx. 12.

of God, unfathomable abyss! See too, how many even at the very end of their lives, who were much wiser than thou art, and much more studious of piety, yet at length being lifted up with pride have fallen through hypocrisy, and perished miserably. If thou enquirest of the Saints what was the cause of these evils, thou wilt for the most part hear the same answer, that men of this sort have forsaken sincere, pure, and fervent

Lukewarm-
ness the cause
of their fall.

prayer, and the study of virtue, and thus by their own lukewarmness have, alas! provoked the anger of God. But since that may not be sin, which one man does, but which another may not do, if the grace of God should be more present with him; be lowly in thine own eyes, and diligently give thyself to prayer and the practice of devotion; thus did St. Antony, as it is reported, triumph over his enemies, thus did Moses over Amalek; and thus as many Saints as there are in Heaven triumphed over hell.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER these words of Christ as if He were hanging upon the Cross, in thy presence. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you!" O how sweet are these Thy words, Blessed Jesu, to our mouths! but how shall we come to Thee, except Thou draw us unto Thee with the cords of a man, with the cords of love? Draw us unto Thee, we beseech Thee, that we may run like harts to the fountains of water; draw us who now are labouring and walking along difficult and uncertain paths; make us to go in the path of Thy commandments, and teach us Thy statutes. We are heavily laden, alas, with many sins. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name, O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins for Thy Name's sake.

Christ's most
sweet invita-
tion.

A Prayer

THAT WE MAY BE FREED FROM THE MANY PERILS OF THIS LIFE.

My adversaries have surrounded me on every side; they have laid a net for my feet, and pressed down my soul; my beauty is gone for very trouble, and worn away because of all mine enemies. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will save me from my angry enemies? Turn Thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul; O save me for Thy mercies' sake. O Jesu! Jesu! art not Thou my Redeemer? is there in death no remembrance of Thee? and who will give Thee thanks in the pit? Let all mine enemies be confounded and sore vexed; let them be turned

Acknow-
ledgment of
our misery.

back and put to shame suddenly; for Thou, O Lord, hast heard my petition; Thou, O Lord, hast received my prayer. Away from me, all ye Act of confidence in God. that work vanity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people, that have set themselves against me round about; for Thou, Lord, hast called me, and sustained me.

Yea, Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me; from which, as Thy servant Chrysostom exhorts, we should depart like lions breathing fire, made terrible to the devil, and tossing about our head. And what is this fire but that of Thy love? For Thou, my God, art a consuming fire, and Thou alone art the God that answereth by fire^b: and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing, it is nothing to Thee for Whom I live. Grant Thou therefore this unto me, and it sufficeth; and wherefore shall I not hope it from Thee Who hast given Thine Ownself, when born for my Companion, when eating with us given Thyself for our food; in dying given Thyself as a ransom for me Thy most unworthy slave; and in reigning art about to give Thyself to us for our reward. I confess before Thee, and Thy Church, that I owe myself to Thee, yea and more than myself; but, behold! I am undone, and that eternally, unless Thou stretch forth Thy right hand to me the work of Thy hands.

Remember therefore, O Lord, remember I pray Thee, how Thou hast made me, and hast again made me anew; and still sustainest me, and for so many years hast sought for me. Behold, I now, O Jesu, I Act of invocation. now implore Thee, and call upon Thee most humbly and most lovingly, whilst Thou art near. Out of the deep will I call unto Thee, O Lord, and to the unfathomable abyss of Thy pity. Arise, O Lord, arise, O Lord, lest our enemies ever bear rule over us, that they may know that this is Thy hand; that Thou, Lord, hast done it; and that Thou, Lord, art become a defence for the oppressed, a refuge in due time of trouble. And they that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek Thee; but Thou hast lifted them up from the gates of death; that they may shew forth all Thy praises within the ports of the daughter of Sion. The poor committeth himself unto Thee, for Thou art the Helper of the friendless; as oft as he shall confess himself in prayer unto Thee, and lift up his hands in the sanctuary, and bless Thee. For Thine eyes consider the poor; for the comfortless troubles' sake of the needy, and because of the deep sighing of the poor, Thou wilt arise, and help us, and preserve us from this generation for ever. So let it be,—so let it be!

^b 1 Kings xviii. 24.

RULES.

In the first place, run over the whole world in thy mind, at any fixed day or hour, as e. g. on some solemn Feast day, or at the time of even song: *From the miseries of others learn thine own blessings.* and think on the miseries which other men are suffering in mind and body, and give thanks to God, that by His especial mercy He has pleased that thou shouldst be free from the same.

Secondly, contemplate the world as though it were a place filled with snares, like as St. Antony saw it; for the creatures are snares and traps, because man being entangled with the love of these things is caught and taken by the enemy. Think in what manner thou canst aid thyself and others, and escape.

Thirdly, meditate upon the blessed Sacrament sometimes, at least once in the day, and with lively faith compose thyself as if standing before the Mercy-seat, yea rather as if thou wert in Heaven itself; and thus to Christ Crucified devote thy contests, to Him ascribe whatever victories thou hast attained, and seek for Grace that thou mayst be enabled to overcome the snares of the devil. And resolve that thou never wilt allow, and dost not allow at present, any thing of human frailty to creep over and gain possession of thee.

Ejaculations.

"O Lord, my God, in Thee do I put my trust; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." Psalm vii. 1.

"Plead Thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; and fight Thou against them that fight against me: lay hold upon the shield and buckler, and stand up to help me." Psalm xxxv. 1, 2.

"Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me." Psalm xxxi. 17.

"Why standest Thou so far off, O Lord? and hidest Thy face in the needful time of trouble?" Psalm x. 1.

Considerations

ON HINDRANCES TO OUR PROGRESS IN A SPIRITUAL LIFE, AND FIRST OF DESPISING MEN'S JUDGMENTS.

WHEN any one has been freed, as the children of Israel were, from Egyptian bondage, and is endeavouring to journey unto Horeb the mount of God; there is nothing the infernal Pharaoh doth not object and urge, in order, if he cannot altogether turn from the way of salvation the man that is journeying unto Heaven, he may at least retard his course and

progress with divers temptations and petty assaults. Such an one therefore must be furnished with weapons, and must know how to fight with the princes of this darkness. And because a man's foes are those of his own household, and man is truly a beast of prey, or as Scripture says, a wolf unto his fellow men, (as it is said to have been shewn to St. Antony by the angel,) men hinder each other very greatly by emulations, and envying, by strifes, and rash judgments, and detraction, therefore I think it right first to treat of despising these.

Meditation

ON DESPISING MEN'S JUDGMENTS.

WE may begin first by placing ourselves in the presence of God, amidst the whole court of Heaven, with purpose of directing all things unto His glory.

Secondly, we must implore His grace right humbly, that we may be able to discern that which is the fountain of almost all evil, to wit, subservience unto men's judgments, and the ordering of our life according to them, which the generality of mortals do.

Christian.—O Eternal Wisdom, it is commonly said that men are moved not so much by things themselves, as by opinions concerning those things; and lo, if I run through the courses of my life, if at any time grief, or joy, or fear, or hope hath arisen, I see that from men's opinion, their praise or censure, it hath in great part come: for no man fears or grieves at disgraces, infamy, poverty, or contempt, no man exults at honour, fame and the like, unless he makes the opinion of other men the rule as it were to guide his life by. And lo, hence it happens that as often as I make some holy resolution in my heart, I perceive myself considering not only what the things are in themselves, but what is the received opinion of them. For if I set myself a law of holy living, of avoiding evil company and evil conversation, of sobriety, retirement from the world, moderation in food and dress, of frequent confession and Communion;—yet am I in many respects greatly kept back and oppressed with the judgment of men, even of the wicked, or at any rate of those who, neither good nor wicked, linger on the confines of both good and evil, and halt between two opinions; and presently the thought insinuates itself, What will these say, what will they think?

We are influenced in most things by men's judgments.

Christ.—Ought it not rather to be thy consideration, what I by words

Think of God's judgments. and deeds have shewn that I think? I, the Eternal Wisdom, I, thy Judge, Who am about to judge thee according to My own law, according to My own mind and judgments, not surely those of fools and the men of this world. Why then do men's judgments either spur thee on, or keep thee back? Truly that prejudging, which hath not judgment, and which draws back from Me, is grievous indeed.

Christian.—If I do not rather look to Thy judgment, do I not believe and see that I must become a laughing-stock unto Thy Majesty and to the whole world, even to that world which I could trust, foolish and deluding as I knew it to be, with open eyes and of mine own accord? **Why believest thou fools rather than Wisdom?** It greatly vexeth me of myself, to be so carried and swept away by the winds of popular breath, by opinion, not the true weight of things. But who shall deliver me from this common perversity and disease, except it be Thou, my God? for some I see, even of those most bound to a religious life, are borne aside, and that not seldom, by men's judgments; and their applause and censure makes them wander far from their rule of humility and obedience and the law of simplicity. One complains of place and office, of obloquy from his neighbour, loss to his reputation; another covets and affects place and office and employments; and if I ask the cause of all this, it is only men's opinion, that fountain of almost every ill.

Christ.—Yea, is it not indeed a rare object to find a Job in the land of Uz, a good man amongst the evil;—whether we look for him in the world or even among those who profess religion?

Christian.—Thou knowest, good God, what a curse it is, that so few dare to be singular in good, and seek to please Thee? that men would rather perish in the shipwreck of the wicked along with them, than by Thy grace walk upon the waters? Men are ashamed, said Thy servant Augustine complaining of this madness, they are ashamed of having any shame left^c. O the grievous misery and how great the wickedness of this world, that even in cloisters, and among those who mortify themselves, it should exercise such influence! Ought not we, O Jesus, O Thou Who art our life, ought we not to live unto Thee, and to be dead unto the world, as many as are Christians? and this indeed I earnestly desire. For I hear Thy Apostle saying,—If I pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ^d. Is then this truth indeed true? Is it impossible for it to err? It is impossible. Oh, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe me Grace to shew by my actions that I believe it, Thou Who canst only make clean one born of an unclean seed, and art the only Samaritan to heal our wounds!

^c Aug. Confess., lib. ii. cap. 9.

^d Gal. i. 10.

Christ.—Hast not thou, in common with all My disciples, renounced at the holy Font the world, its pomps and judgment, and resolved to serve Me, and so to enter into life?

Christian.—And yet, behold, we are afraid of being called and reckoned evil, this we cannot endure, but would rather even be evil than be reckoned so. For man's words' sake we are ready to be evil, yea and that gratuitously and for nothing, rather than for Thine to be good and to be blessed.

Christ.—And truly what are these judgments which ye prefer, but the empty thoughts and ravings of a few miserable and, very commonly, evil and evilly affected men. For each so speaks and judges as he is affected. But since the whole world lieth in wickedness, and all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; what can its judgment be? Can an evil tree bring forth good fruit? can an evil man exhort unto goodness, and sincerely approve it?

Christian.—Those who desire to be thought wiser than the rest, would fain in their folly join the world's judgment with virtue and religion, though the things are altogether at variance, and though they cannot join them. So we see them prefer to throw some disparagement on religious exercises, rather than be thought not to subscribe to the judgments of men, often the worst of men.

Christ.—Yet what good or harm do such judgments do men? what matters it to the moon, the sun, the stars, to be esteemed gods by idolators? what matters it to gold, to be reckoned of no greater value than mud?

What good
do men's
judgments
do us?

Christian.—Nothing surely, nor to us either, that we are variously judged, that we are praised, are well known, are variously renowned or censured, loved or hated; and I remember how it is written, If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but now the world hateth you, because I have chosen you out of the world; but know, that it hated Me, before it hated you? What saying can be more sweet to me, what saying more true than this?

Christ.—To desire to be loved above all men, when every neighbour ought to be loved by us, even as a man loves himself, is to commit an injustice against all men; and a man is made utterly unworthy of praise, by desiring praise. He who desires praise, becomes straightway thereby no object for it. For none is praised with truth, but he that is good; he alone is truly praiseworthy, and not falsely so accounted. That any then may be a fit subject for praise, he ought to shrink from it, since a man cannot be praised with truth, who desires to be praised; but is indeed especially worthy of reproof

To desire to
be loved more
than all, is
an injury to
all.

for his vanity. In like manner, the man who having met with an injury or with reproachful words, is angered or grieved thereby, gives sure testimony to his being worthy of such treatment; he shews that he was covetous of being praised in the degree in which he shrinks from being reproached. If therefore thou hast been despised or neglected, if any has suspected

Whoso is
grieved at
contempt,
deserves it.
Whoso re-
joiceth at
it, is unde-
serving of
it.

To affect
praise is
like the de-
vil.

evil of thee, and thou hast gloried in it, thou shewest that it was indeed unjustly done: whereas thou hadst been deserving of contempt, if to be contemned would have grieved thee. And in truth what hast thou of thyself, what that is really thine? Nothing at all. For all is Mine. Why then wilt thou claim any thing for thine own, or desire that it should be attributed to thee by others, or that others should honour thee for it? Even as the devils desire Divine honours to be paid them, so the vain man is desirous to be praised, and had in admiration,

and will rob Me of honour. If he were wise, he would say with Mine Apostles, to those who love and admire him, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had done this thing?" or as others, when they would have done sacrifice unto them: "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men, of like passions with you." Wouldst thou then that men should neglect Me to look up to thee? should praise and honour thee in so great degree? should become My enemies, that they may be thy friends? Wouldst thou pass Me by and forsake Me, in order to give

Whoso de-
lights to be
loved by men,
steals men's
hearts from
God.

the honour which thou couldst render, thy affections and admiration, to the vainest of idols, men's opinion? For if thou love it, that thy love bringeth thee under its power: and thou lovest the world, and art made an enemy unto Me? Wouldst thou have men hindered by love of thee, from being turned with all their love unto Me? wouldst thou place thyself as a wall between them and Me, lest they should entirely cleave unto Me? Thou art delighted perhaps that many should look up to thee, in other words, should be deceived, and thou deceive them; thou art delighted that they should come unto thee, and that I should give unto them by thy means. Seest thou not how flies to thy food, and vermin to thy flesh, will flock together, and prey upon it? For themselves they devour, and take from thee: so too those who come to thee, whether for aid or comfort, seek what thou art but the channel to supply them with, seek what is their own and what I give them; for for their sakes I gave it them; Mine it is which they receive. To Me therefore let them give the praise; neither be thou careful either for the praise or the reproach of men, or anxious respecting their judgment.

Christian.—If then I ought neither to aim at or hope for praise, if I

would attain to virtue, nor yet be impatient of reproach : O good God, what folly is it to be moved by it to consent to evil, or, if not that, yet by disturbing myself and fretting at it, to fall back in goodness, to be less good than I might have been !

Christ.—Who would injure his health or knowledge or strength or property, because they were not praised, but found fault with by men ? Nobody subjects himself to the pain of starvation, because madmen, and such as wish no good to him, may cry out that meat and drink are poison.

Christian.—And yet, lest somebody should reproach us, we often refrain from religious exercises, and observances, in other words from the food of the soul, and thus injure its strength and lose its riches, and have sold ourselves, and for nought too, unto sin^e.

Christ.—What if any one were to consult you which he ought to choose, and which would be best for him, to be really rich, honoured and happy, or only to be falsely reckoned so ? to have all things in abundance, or to be in want ? endowed with true real virtue, or the shadow of it ? Would you not judge that what was real should be preferred to what was fictitious and empty ? And yet all are carried away by this error ; and in order to escape abuse, had rather be unrighteous or less righteous, than to be truly deserving of praise for their virtue, be truly happy and worthy of honour. How differently will they think in the hour of death, and in the Judgment ! yea then the judgment of the whole world will be different. Then shall he be praised by the world who despised the world ; and he be reproached, who, charmed by her blandishing words, hath passed a slothful and disgraceful life. Then shall the love of poverty, contempt of honours, and of the world and its opinions, then shall bountifulness toward the poor, and every other virtue, be extolled even by the unrighteous ; and be praised by My Saints and by Me, for ever : so that not without cause have I willed that the day of the death of My Saints should be and be reckoned the day of their nativity. For then do they arise, and like stars, when this day of life faileth, they begin to shine in darkness.

Christian.—But the wicked even then, when their salvation is at stake, lest they should appear inconsistent and cowardly, are ashamed to turn unto Thee, publicly to confess, to communicate, and live religious lives ; and endure the dreadful pangs of conscience.

Christ.—If you ask why, the reason is ready at hand : they say, What a talk there would be !

Why choose
false things
for true ?

Many will
not turn to
God from
fear of men's
opinion.

Christian.—And thus, good Jesu, men's talk, and a passing word, is really of more account with them than salvation. It is of more account than to receive Thee, to be visited by Thee, be fed, or strengthened by Thee. A word is of more account than all Thy gifts. Their fears of The folly of those who regard men's judgments. man, and to hear their name passed from mouth to mouth of men, are of more account than to hazard eternal life. Oh, what a fatal strength and influence is there in men's opinions! Alas! What shall a man answer unto Thee in the Judgment, when before the whole world his folly shall be laid open? Then shalt Thou, O Eternal Wisdom, upbraid him with his folly, because, despising Thee, he esteemed the word of the vilest men of more account than Thy command. Then shall the whole world triumph over him, Saints be astonished, and devils mock him, they whose praises he had so greedily sought, when they were really but poisoned darts of the enemy with which he was wounded, and for which he shall now be punished with everlasting shame.

Christ.—But whoso shall have confessed Me and My religion before men, him will I also confess before My Father: and whoso shall have been ashamed of Me and of My words, of Him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and with the holy Angels.

Christian.—How shall the children of this world grieve, alas! in a long eternity, that for some one's word, or thought, or beck, See thou neglect no opportunity of virtue. they have passed by a thousand opportunities of salvation, and of eternal glory!

Christ.—Then, as also at the Judgment, the wicked shall wail, saying, "Lo, these were they, whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach: we fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honour: lo, how are they numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints!"

Christian.—We would fain be loved, and behold, if for that we neglect the love of Thee, we shall be hated for ever of Thee, our God, and of Thine Angels: we desire to be honoured, and yet all the wickednesses and the secret places of our hearts shall be laid open unto all men; to be renowned, and lo, we shall be buried in the eternal dungeon and in eternal oblivion, nor wilt Thou ever remember us, O our God: they, Why dost thou not prefer eternal things to such as endure for a moment? whom we have listened to, whose judgments we have been afraid of, shall load us with perpetual curses. If we are seeking honour, alas! would it not be better to hope for and choose eternal honour, rather than that which is but for a moment? O blessed, and thrice blessed souls! in whom the

Holy Spirit hath infused the mind to despise the world's honours and its favours alike, and lifted them higher than all human things. Oh blessed Alexis! who being of most illustrious birth, didst hide that birth, in order to prove thyself to the whole world a son of God: Thou conqueredst, noble champion, and by thy concealment hast diffused over the whole world the rays of holiness. Oh ye Apostles and Martyrs of Christ! what examples have ye set us of contempt of this world's opinions. Ye departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that ye were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus. O blessed bands of Saints, how happily did ye scoff at the world, lest the world should scoff at you! what it praised, ye trod under foot; what it found fault with, that ye chose. Tell me, I pray you, who hath endowed you with this spirit?

Christ.—Sure, flesh and blood revealed it not unto them, but the Spirit of My Father which is in heaven: and great was the peace that they obtained by it; careful for nothing; subject to none, but free; unconcerned through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, they live; as chastened, and not killed. But the worldly man, whom human regards harass, is obliged to wait on all men's eyes and looks and rumours, and to be the slave of all; (for whoso loves any object, must needs by love be made subject unto it;) and which is indeed most miserable, is ever hunting after love and popularity, and a good estimation of himself (which on account of his vanity can never be a true estimation), and which, whether he has really gained, he can never know. For the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? and he who commends with his mouth, often blames thee in silence; or if one should praise, a hundred will despise thee; howsoever thou shouldst twist thyself as Proteus did, one man can never please even one man in all things, and one man can never please all men, but will displease the greater number.

The reward of him that regardeth not men's judgments.

The disadvantage of making much of men's judgments.

Human praise empty.

Christian.—O how dearly are men's opinions bought! which, whether they be truly what he would have them, a man never knows; nor if he knew, could be one moment certain of them; so unstable, I see, is the heart of man, his love so unstable; what to-day and this hour he approves, the self-same thing in the same hour he disapproves. We wonder at him who squanders his goods upon lust, or the pleasures of the palate; but far more infatuated the man, who for men's fancies and opinions makes shipwreck of

No one sure of popularity.

true honour, peace, goodness, and Thy grace,—in other words, of all good things.

Christ.—Many are the ills indeed that man is heir to, but they are increased immeasurably to him who meddles with men's opinion, admiration, love, and honour, since he feels any injury to these as though it were an injury to his own person, and thus himself heaps fuel for his own burning, weaves chains to drag himself withal.

Christian.—I stedfastly purpose therefore never to give heed to the opinions of men and of the world; but to look to this one thing alone, what reason requires of me, what Thy divine will, what Thy commands and counsels. For what the judgment of the world is, how senseless and frenzied, hath been evidently shewn forth in Thy life and death; for Thou wert born by night in a stable, Thou walkedst amongst men thirty years, unknown and despised; and after. Thou didst deign to reveal Thyself unto the world, how often, sweet Jesu, didst Thou commend this despised state unto us? Thou soughtest no honour or dignity or praise; Thou saidst, I seek not Mine own glory; there is One that seeketh and judgeth. But never did it more plainly appear how false this world's judgment is, than in Thy most holy death; for Thou, holy, harmless, a Lamb without spot, wast numbered by it with the transgressors and despised, accounted the vilest of men; and shall I then esteem its praise or blame? Neither hast Thou shewed any other way unto Thy Saints, who have loved Thee in earnest, and not feignedly; in sincerity, and not in error, nor deceived by self-love; they have ardently desired to be despised, to be held and accounted for fools, that they might be able to follow Thy example. Surely we do Thee great injury, as thy servant Chrysostom speaketh^b, if, just as though it were not enough that Thou shouldst praise us, we forsake Thee and hasten to our fellow-servants; this it is that turns all things upside down, that hath thrown the whole earth into confusion; because we do all things with an eye to men, and have no care of good works, but seek praise to ourselves from our fellow-servants.

Christ.—Therefore truly did Jerome speak to this effect, that the first virtue of a servant of God is to despise the judgments of men, and always to remember My Apostle's word, who saith, If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of CHRIST.

Christian.—Nor only by examples dost Thou invite me, most loving Jesu; but by manifold blessings besides, which Thou bestowest upon

^b Chrysostom de contemnendâ laude hominum.

me every moment of my life. For what do these proclaim unto me, but that true praise must be sought from Thee, from Whom all good things do come? For if there be no good, but that which is from Thee, the boundless Ocean of all good, why do I desire to be accounted of by another, who can bestow nothing upon me except it be from Thee; and can estimate nothing truly, because he cannot know any thing fully? No judgment is true but Thine alone. Since therefore we should not reverence men's judgment, did we not at the same time promise ourselves some good from them; whoso sees Thee to be the Fountain of all good, and nothing to exist out of Thee, he for Thy sake despises all things. For what should he seek out of Thee? He sees the ways to be long and difficult, by which the blindness of man seeketh rest, where it cannot be found, and that by these very means unhappy man brings himself into all manner of unrest, and grief, and anguish of spirit; for he trusts himself to the uncertain gales of men's wills and favour and fear, though they never continue in one stay. Oh, how foolishly doth such an one set his heart upon vanity, and lean upon that which is as the yielding waves, or air, or winds! And, not without reason, is he full of fear, yea and by his fear plainly shews his own folly and improvidence. And yet he seeks these baubles at the cost of a thousand manœuvres, fears, disguises.

God's bene-
fits should
teach us to
despise men.

A Debout Exercise.

O good Jesu, how is Thy creature made subject unto vanity, not willingly! O my Creator! how many snares are there laid, and stumbling-blocks set, lest we should come unto Thee, our Love! For what is there in the whole course of life, which would be more likely to make us swerve from the right path, than that we should have respect unto men's judgment? Lo, multitudes had rather perish, and be for ever tormented, whilst from a hurtful and pernicious shame they confess imperfectly their sins, lest man should judge or despise them! O misery! what madness is here! Why do we seek to please man, and displease Thee? Is it of so great concern unto us, that he should think and speak rightly of me,—that the ignorant multitude, that fallible and false man, which changeth hair by hair, should do so,—that rather than displease him I should choose to be condemned eternally by Thee? O my God, O my Redeemer, this seemeth to be a very world of iniquity, this the fountain of all battles, all strifes, deceits, ambition, haughtiness, and pride; for whoso looketh not to men's judgment, the same is

The love of
the creature
a snare.

To make
great account
of the world's
judgments
the source of
miseries.

humble and peaceable, worthy to be loved by Thee, my God, and by men, and by Thine Angels: he lives without care, he dies happy, he findeth favour in Thine eyes. Let that favour come unto me, I beseech Thee, and let not man's countenance look upon me, but let him despise me, if only my soul may be pleasing unto Thee. Why, wretched that we are, choose we to be the servants of men, when Thou with Thy Blood hast made us free? Why also respect we the thoughts of men, and that more than Thy statutes?

Ah! Lord, this is the misfortune of the children of Adam. But Thou art able, even with a word, even with a will, to heal our infirmity. Look upon me, and I shall be safe. Turn Thou unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in misery. I hope indeed that since Thou deignest so often to visit us, yea to be with us even unto the end of the world, that it cannot be but that Thy virtue, Thy Flesh, Thy Blood, shall strengthen me. I remember that which is written, They two shall be one flesh: and that this is said of Thee, Christ Jesu, and the Church. Cause therefore that I be one with Thee, and a meet member of Thy body; cause that being refreshed by this Bread, I may never hunger any more, and drinking of the fountain of Thy grace I may not thirst again for ever, except for Thee alone, after Whom my soul longeth, like as the hart after the water-brooks.

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy, Maker of all things, upon the vanity of our estate, and the bondage, wherein we are enslaved to the world, and to the thoughts of men. If we choose to be servants, is it not better to serve Thee, my God, the Living and True? Thee, the King of kings and Lord of lords? if I would fain be praised, let it be by Thee and with truth, and before the assembly of Heaven, and the whole earth, and for ever: if I long after, and desire glory, let it be to wait for eternal glory from Thy hand; if I fear blame, then ought I mightily to fear to be despised and slighted by Thee. For who shall praise him whom Thou shalt despise? who shall call him good, whom Thou shalt reject, Thou the God that canst not lie, Who searchest out the hearts and reins? Behold, O Lord, now have I chosen the way of truth, and all Thy judgments are true and righteous altogether. Make, therefore, my darkness to be light, that I may no more desire man's day, but may wish to please, may fear to displease only Thee. For Thou art my praise, Thou art my glory: if I must needs glory, I will glory in Thee, because through Thee will we overthrow our enemies, and in Thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us; that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, may serve Thee without fear all the days of our life. Amen.

Reliance on
God.

Application
to Commu-
nion.

RULES FOR THE DESPISING OF MEN'S JUDGMENTS.

FIRST of all, it behoves a man to consider well his doings, and to order them not by the judgment of the multitude, but by the law of God; and then with a noble mind to make progress in the way of goodness. Order thine actions by God's judgment. What a hindrance it is to such an one to respect men's judgments cannot be told; for this diverts many from frequently confessing and communicating, and from other devout exercises; and whilst very many dare to be leaders in the school of vanity and wickedness, you will find few bold enough to set the fashion of being religious.

Secondly, it is often a help to him to consider that he stands in a mighty arena, and that what he does is done before God and His Heavenly court, and so to despise men's judgments. Consider the theatre thou standest in.

Thirdly, since this evil originates in self-love, and no one scarcely regards the unfavourable judgment or censure of another, except he be seeking praise or something else at his hand, there is much to exercise greatness of mind; for this will not allow a man to be in bondage to men's vain judgments and surmises, or to be dependent upon others, and a suitor to their bounty at the high price of Christian liberty. The great in soul despiseth judgments of men.

Fourthly, it has been customarily practised by the Saints, sometimes to do things which may provoke abuse, and which may render them despised, though without any just occasion for it; and in this it behoves us to imitate them, if we would aim at the prize of perfection, and arrive at peace and tranquillity of soul.

Ejaculations.

"With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." 1 Cor. iv. 3.

"I deal with the thing that is lawful and right; O give me not over unto mine oppressors." Psalm cxix. 121.

"Give sentence with me, O God, and defend my cause against the ungodly people; O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man." Psalm xliii. 1.

"I have not desired man's day, Thou knowest." Jer. xvii. 16. Vulgate.

Meditation

CONCERNING ANOTHER IMPEDIMENT TO OUR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS,
VIZ. VENIAL SIN.

By way of place, imagine thy soul, and thy whole self, covered as it were with the leprosy of thy imperfections, set in the presence of God and the assembly of Heaven.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER thy life past, and how many sins and failings thou hast been guilty of. First, in respect to thy settled purpose of life, and falling short of the same with respect to self-denial and seemliness of behaviour. Secondly, in prayer, and in partaking of Sacraments. Thirdly, in thy actions, even when done in obedience to God. Fourthly, in thy daily conversation. Consider thy life past thus, I say, and be sorry from the bottom of thine heart, and humble thy spirit exceedingly. For thou wilt see thy own righteousness to be nothing but filthy rags.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER the serious importance of even venial sin. First, in that it displeaseth the most High God, and grieveth the Holy Spirit; so that if all the world could be saved by the commission of one venial sin, yet were it not to be done; and yet thou hast so often done such; and on what slight inducement. Secondly, on account of God's manifold benefits towards thee. Thirdly, in that every Christian in Baptism, and others since by special vows and in a stricter manner, have been dedicated to God. Fourthly, from the many aids thus supplied to us: whence Bernard saith¹: "It is no great matter, sayest thou, though I should continue in these venial and very trifling faults? This," he answers, "most dearly beloved, is impenitence, this way of talking is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the blasphemy that cannot be forgiven."

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER the loss it entails. First, though it does not take Grace quite away, yet it clogs the soul in the way of holiness, and makes that way more painful. Secondly, it dulls all graces, disfigures the soul, that bride of Christ, and lessens holy fervour. Thirdly, it is the cause of grievous desolation, grief and scrupulousness of spirit, often for several years. Fourthly, because it makes persons incapable of spiritual consolation, so that they can neither enjoy temporal pleasures, nor those of a religious life: since no one can either fully satiate his appetite with the former, or his mind with the latter. Fifthly, because it exposes us to great peril of deadly sin; for as Augustine observes, a downfall is to be feared

¹ Bernard in Comm. S. Pauli, Serm. I.

from the multitude, if not from the greatness of our offences, according to that which is written, "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little^k." Whence also Bernard saith^l, "A heart dedicated to God, should avoid lesser faults no less than greater ones. For what matters it, if it be one great wave, or a multitude of little drops from the sink, that drowns thee?" Know it is by these the strength of the soul is withered up, that so a man easily falls into mortal sins. Yea, so that Gregory saith, Sometimes a man sins more fatally by a small fault, than a greater one; for the greater, in that it is more easily acknowledged to be a fault, is the sooner amended; but the lesser, because it is thought to be none at all, is so much the worse, because a habit of it is the more fearlessly persisted in. Sixthly, consider that great things all necessarily depend upon small ones. An orator pays attention even to syllables, and pauses. Seventhly, that what are trifles in our judgment, are often great things in the sight of God; as in the case of the man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath day^m, in the case of Achanⁿ, in the doubts of Moses^o, in the instances of Eli for the sins which he knew in his sons and restrained not^p, and in the prevarication of Ananias and Sapphira^q, or those who had left works of mercy undone^r. O my soul, what is there in the whole earth so dear to thee, as to make thee incur so many unhappy results!

The least things to be avoided.

Little sins sometimes more dangerous than greater ones.

FOURTH POINT.

CONSIDER what a stumbling-block and impediment venial offences are to thy neighbour. For though they be small, they take away all a man's influence, and also hinder great things; whilst other persons marvel that a man who communicates, prays, sings psalms so often, and who perhaps in some cases has given up all things for Christ's sake, should yet stick in those little things, which they themselves, though making less profession of doing so, often surmount. And in truth it is a lamentable thing that a man should have done so much to have the fruition of God, especially in such ways of life as are more especially dedicated to His service, and yet should not remove such trifling hindrances in order to it; should have dug so deep in order to find water, and should leave off now at last. Secondly, it happens often that such a person makes a whole community to offend; whilst from some

The sadness of not shunning venial offences.

^k Eccclus. xix. 1.

^m Numb. xv. 32.

^o Numb. xx. 12.

^q Acts v.

^l Bern. lib. de ord. vitæ.

ⁿ Joshua vii.

^p 1 Sam. iii. 13.

^r Matt. xxv. 45.

such fault he introduces bad customs, which afterwards sometimes no diligence of those who are set over others is able to correct. Thirdly, see how Saints have fled from the least sins and have reprov'd them, of which some remarkable instances are recorded.

FIFTH POINT.

CONSIDER how very slavish it is to commit venial sin: for it is just as if you were to say, It is not absolutely forbidden under pain of death, and therefore I choose, and it is lawful for me, to transgress. On the contrary, it is the part of a good son to avoid even the least offence against his father; a thing so acceptable to God, that such a person He promotes over a thousand other righteous men, as is plain in the instance of Abraham, Job, and, to take an example out of Scripture, in the case of St. Antony. For from such examples of old which He has had recorded in Scripture, it is evident that God seeks such a man amongst us, as may make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Him for the land, that He should not destroy it. See to what heights of holiness God raises such as avoid the least faults; as also, on the other hand, how He chastens others that are lukewarm with scruples and temptations. For he who does not co-operate with a little Grace, is unworthy of greater Grace; and greater Grace is denied unto him, because of his lukewarmness. For sins, be they small or great, cannot possibly go unpunished; because whether man repents of them, or God judges them, either they are punished here or hereafter. Tell me, what sum would you take to be burnt alive? You answer, No sum; and yet you daily, to gratify vanity or some other passion, expose yourself to this danger. "Woe, therefore, unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope^a." And therefore resolve to make a general examination of thyself with all strictness, that thou mayst attain unto purity of conscience.

A Prayer

FOR GRACE TO ABHOR EVEN VENIAL SINS.

Who hath known Thy mind, O Lord? and who hath been Thy counsellor? Truly Thy judgments are like a great deep; unsearchable are Thy judgments, and incomprehensible to thought^u. Thou art higher than Heaven;

^a Isaiah v. 18.

^t Rom. xi. 34.

^u Psalmi xxxvi. 6.

what can man do? deeper than hell; what can he know? The measure of Thee is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. If Thou shalt cut off, and shut up, or gather together, who can hinder Thee^x? or who can say, Why doest Thou so? Behold Thou, O God, art exalted in Thy power, and there is none that teacheth like Thee^y! Who shall search Thy ways, or who shall say to Thee, Thou hast wrought iniquity? So many times as Thou hadst promised unto the Israelites the land flowing with milk and honey, and yet two only (be astonished, ye heavens, and thou earth!) Caleb and Joshua, attained unto it;—though Thou didst feed all with the bread of Heaven in the wilderness, and didst keep their raiment from waxing old^z. Moses was Thy friend, Thou spakest unto him face to face, and ^{Various ex-} when he prayed for them, Thou wast reconciled unto the ungodly; ^{amples.} and lo, he did but doubt at the Waters of strife, and was unable to enter into the land of promise. Gideon, the mighty man of valour, who after victories gained by Thy help became the saviour of the people, made an ephod for himself, and it became the ruin of himself and of his house. Sampson, whom a barren woman had been made to bring forth, the deliverer of his people, how did he depart from Thee and go back, and was made a reproach unto his enemies? The children of Israel had gone up by Thy command to avenge the wickedness of the Benjamites, and lo, several times were they beaten and put to flight. There was not one like unto Saul among the people, yet for his pride how was he rejected of Thee? David, the man after Thine own heart, how did he fall, yea and Solomon his son, the beloved of the Lord? Did not a lion slay the prophet who was deceived? Josiah, Thy beloved, went up to fight against Necho, and he perished. Who is there but must be astonished at the various chances and downfalls of these men? Who can weigh their offences, or understand Thy judg- ^{An act of} ments? ^{humiliation.} Therefore I humble myself under Thy mighty Hand, and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst cleanse me from my secret faults, both small and great, and wouldst save from presumptuous sins me, Thy servant, yea the least of Thy servants.

Spare me, O Lord, spare me, and enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. For what though it be perhaps a small thing? Yet he that contemneth small things falleth by little and little: and who knoweth Thy judgment? Behold by much slothfulness the building decayeth^a, and droppings of water drive a man forth from his house in the winter season. So also, O Lord, I fear lest such should drive Thee, alas, forth from Thine house, my heart; since him that is neither cold nor hot, Thou wilt spue out of Thy mouth^b. But come, I beseech Thee,

^x Job xi. 8—10.^y Job xxxvi. 22, 23.^z Deut. viii. 4.^a Eccles. x. 18.^b Rev. iii. 16.

this day ; come unto me, and despise not a contrite and humbled heart ; for though Thy judgments are a great deep, yet is Thy mercy over all Thy works. To it I fly, both groaning and lamenting, and hoping in Thee. I will say in the presence of Thy court, My praise shall be always of Thee. I am become as it were a monster unto many, but Thou art my strong Helper. Have compassion upon a soul that seeketh Thee, and loveth, and sigheth unto Thee, and that trusteth not in any thing except in Thine infinite mercy. Amen.

RULES FOR PRACTICE.

Every thing great that offends God. FIRST, if thou art wise, think nothing a small thing by which thou knowest that the Great, yea the Thrice greatest and most good God is displeased.

Need to walk circumspectly. Secondly, since venial faults often happen in the case of good men from inadvertency, see that thou do nothing hastily, but with consideration.

The sense of God's presence. Thirdly, retain and never let go from thy mind the sense of God's presence.

Watch in little things. Fourthly, imitate the Saints, and studiously select, and painfully fight against some one, though perhaps a small infirmity ; that so this watchfulness in small things may sharpen thy courage unto greater things, and may divert the enemy for a more troublesome and dangerous contest.

Confession of even very little things, blocks up the way against others. Fifthly, confess very exactly even the least offences after the example of the Saints, not out of a scrupulous, but a loving mind.

Ejaculations.

"Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me ; and the fear of Thee hath undone me." Psalm lxxxviii. 16.

"My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee ; and I am afraid of Thy judgments." Psalm cxix. 120.

"Who regardeth the power of Thy wrath, for even thereafter as a man feareth so is Thy displeasure." Psalm xc. 11.

"Righteousness and equity are the habitation of Thy seat ; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." Psalm lxxxix. 15.





IMAGE THE ELEVENTH.

IMITATE THE SAINTS, AND FOLLOW AFTER THE HIGHER
GIFTS OF GRACE.

And now if thou shouldst perceive thyself slothful and lukewarm, attentively reflect with what fervency and earnest perseverance the Saints gave themselves up to the exercises of devotion. Think particularly of each one of them (A) of whom thou hast read or heard: such as were the ancient Fathers, and Bishops, Founders of religious houses, Virgins and Martyrs, who gave up all for Christ's sake^a. Think of how many in monasteries, and religious houses (B), how many in the desert used to give up of old their nights and days to prayer, and to praising God. Think of what is reported of St. Jerome with his bleeding breast in the desert (C); of Stylites (D), in unceasing prayer, exposed to cold and tempest: of St. Francis (E), melting in the ardour of devotion, at the thought of the five wounds of Christ: think of the Saints of old, who without weariness and without human consolations, persevered in watchings, in labours, in fastings. But thou, alas, O Sinner (F), art sleeping in the midst of dangers, and therefore beholdest them not. O think even now how the Holy Jesus is coming unto thee to awaken thee (G), and saying, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

^a Those especially referred to are Benedict, Augustin, Dominic, Bernard, Norbertus, Bruno, Ignatius, Catharine of Sienna, Teresa.

Meditation

ON THE FERVOUR OF THE SAINTS.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, in the first place, how the Saints, when they were upon the earth, consecrated a great part of their life unto prayer, and were very diligent in cultivating piety. They went on from strength to strength, and rested not day nor night; but sought the Lord with all their heart; and in Elijah's chariot of fire, and with horses of fire^b, that is to say in their aspirations, were borne up into heavenly places. All their sacrifices were consumed of that fire^c, which the Lord came to send on the earth^d, and willed should be mightily kindled, the fire, that is, of love. This it was that made them flock into deserts, and monasteries, as in the Image they are represented, in order that in the sacred leisure of prayer they might with greater quiet enjoy commune with their God. Walk thou too with that mind, and see how diligent thou art, in joining thyself unto God.

See, secondly, what great things the Saints obtained for themselves and others, yea and wrought in all the elements, by virtue of prayer. By prayer Elijah stayed the rain^e, and by prayer he brought it again; one by prayer restored the sick unto health, another the dead unto life. See how highly God is wont to account of prayer and devotion.

Thirdly, observe well, in the midst of how great dangers worldly men are lying, yet without any concern; surrounded on all sides with the most cruel enemies, yet in a deep sleep; notwithstanding that the Lord hath inculcated on them, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." From below, saith St. Bernard^f, the terror by night riseth up against us, on the left hand is the arrow that flieth by day, on the right is the thing that walketh in darkness, and from above there riseth against us the noon-day fiend; but we, who are encompassed with so many

^b 2 Kings ii. 11.

^e James v. 17.

^c Lev. vi. 23.

^f St. Bernard De Sancto Andreâ, Serm. II. 6.

^d Luke xii. 49.

serpents and enemies, are benumbed with the most fatal unconcern and sloth. We sleep leisurely in an affair of the utmost difficulty; laggards in spiritual, but bustling in temporal things; slow to salvation, but ready to our ruin. Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a serpent, or any such as come nigh wild beasts? Thou, Lord, Who rulest the raging of the sea, and stillest the waves thereof when they arise^b.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER, in the first place, how great solace the Saints derived from God by prayer, so that many continued in solitude patiently, without any weariness, and apart from every human solace, for very many years; others in various labours and dangers, and even in torments. For Thy converse hath no bitterness in it, O my God, but with great joy dost Thou use to make us drink out of Thy wells¹, O my Saviour, to drink of Thy wine, the wine that maketh virgins to flourish², wherewith Thou makest glad the hearts of Thy Saints. Secondly, consider the emptiness of all human consolation: for all things pass away like a shadow.

Prayer the chief pleasure of the Saints.

All the pleasures of the ungodly bring pain.

Every pleasure here below
Hath within a sting of woe,
Ever like to flitting bees,
Sheds a honey drop, then flees
Far away, but in the mind
Leaves a lasting sting behind¹.

But the very leavings of holy thought and meditation make a festival in the soul which delighteth in the Lord. For in praying, saith Bernard^m, we drink of Thy wine which maketh glad the heart of man, the wine of the Spirit, which inebriates, and sheds over the spirit obliviousness of all carnal things. And Augustine, wounded with the dart of love, affirmed: Sweeter are the tears of them that pray than the joys of the theatres. And what said the Prophet David? Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. And what is it with which the Lord, Who is rich in mercy, hath recompensed them? Even that which He Himself promised; I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. Oh, that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long forⁿ!

Solace of the godly.

^a Eccles. xii. 12.

^b Psalm lxxxix. 10.

¹ Isaiah xii. 3.

² Zech. ix. 17.

¹ Bœt. de Consol.

^m Bernard. Ser. xviii. in Cant.

ⁿ Job vi. 8.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER how the Saints in Heaven are looking on in all our dangers and toils, and out of their charity towards poor mortals suplicate God for us with all fervency : and how shameful it is that we should ourselves be drowsy in giving heed to our own salvation ; and especially, when we pray, should present ourselves before Him, and be ourselves lukewarm when encompassed by fervent Cherubim and Seraphim. Whence the Church, with good reason surely, beseeches the Father of Mercies that together with Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven He would allow us to laud and magnify His glorious Name, and cause our prayers to be admitted. Secondly, How they, through all eternity, exalt the Lord in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the seat of the elders^o. Therefore even now begin, O soul that art wedded unto Christ, that which God created thee that thou mightest do eternally ; neither suffer it to happen, that the greatest part of thy time should be lost in empty matters and idle talk, and fragments and scanty portions be grudgingly yielded unto prayer and devotion.

Exercise

TO ATTAIN THE FERVOUR OF THE SAINTS.

Shame hath covered my face, O Lord my God, because I am become a stranger unto my brethren^p, Thy Saints, an alien and unlike to my mother's children, the children of Thy Church. For I see that they, when alive, being full of the Holy Ghost, never gave their spirits rest from prayer, were instant in good works, walked circumspectly before Thee. Oh, with what countless sighs did they use to knock at the doors of Thy palace, at Thy most sweet heart, O Lord Jesus ! With how many desires full of humility did they pierce through the well-ordered array of Thine Angels !

Prayer of Manasse. *A hundred times a day was one used to bend the knees of his body, and a thousand times those of his heart : another with tearful eyes and in silence cried unto Thee, being afflicted and troubled, that but a ray might shine on him from Thee, the Sun of righteousness. Oh, that the clouds, wicked thoughts that is, which also separate me from Thee, might be scattered ; and the thistles and thorns from the ground of our heart be rooted out, in which Thou hast so often sowed the true seed, and bedewed it with Thine own Blood, from the plenteousness and the charity of*

^o Psalm cvii. 32.^p Psalm lxix. 7, 8.

Thy most pitiful heart. But I, much more wretched and miserable, sigh to follow them; and to will indeed is present with me, but how to perform I find not, except Thou shalt give it unto me. I will rise, and seek Thee only, Whom my soul loveth^a; I will go into the wilderness, that Thou mayst deign to speak unto my heart; that I may be able to go on from strength to strength, until I see Thee, the God of gods in Sion, and be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thine house.

To this end, lead me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, into the path of Thy commandments, in this place of horror and vast loneliness, that I may always serve Thee with fear and trembling, neither unconcerned in the midst of dangers, nor faint-hearted in the midst of adversities. This surely affrights me the worst, and pierces quite through my heart with the sword of most sharp fear, that in the midst of so great dangers I am found less timorous, less disciplined, less solicitous than necessary; since one of two things this very carelessness of ours demonstrates, either that we are utterly given up to our enemies, yet know it not; (which may Thy most merciful goodness vouchsafe to avert!) or if, in the midst of all this we are preserved, that we are too little thankful unto Thee, Who dost defend us^r. Make a bridle, therefore, for my mouth with Thy praise, that my works may bless Thee^s. For Thou commandest always to pray, and not to faint. When, therefore, the frailty and unstableness of my heart suffereth me not to speak with Thee, Oh that holy, just, and godly works of mine may bless Thy Name, and with those heavens which, as our promised prize, palace, and kingdom, Thou hast ordained should be ever in our sight, they may declare Thy glory^t! Hast Thou not created me unto honour, and unto Thy praise, and unto this end chosen me before the foundation of the world? How comes it then, my wanderings of heart and eyes dishonour Thee, and when I am about to offer odours and most sweet incense unto my Lord, out of the fountain of mine unclean mind, even wicked thoughts have ascended into mine heart?

What can I do, I to whom the very ointment of prayer, the medicine of contemplation turneth into a fault, and woundeth my soul? to whom prayer, the consolation of the godly, yieldeth sorrow? and that which is the refuge of the unhappy, provoketh wrath? to whom the highest bliss and very food of Angels, praises and prayer to Thee, if but prolonged a little, are nauseous and a weariness. Mine imperfectness Thine eyes have seen^u; leave me not, neither forsake me; and I will walk and not faint^x, I will fly and take no rest, until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of

^a Cant. iii. 2.^r Bernard, Serm. II. de St. Andr.^s See Isaiah xlviii. 9. Vulgate.^t Psalm xix. 1.^u Psalm cxxxix. 15. Vulgate.^x Isaiah xl. 31.

Jacob ; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber unto mine eyelids, until mine heart awaketh unto Thee, and every desire of mine carries me unto Thee, that I may be one with Thee, Who daily for this very
Application unto the Communion. *end knockest at the door of my soul, and dost therefore immingle Thyself with us, and dost mould Thy Body into us, that we may be made one with Thee, as a body that is fitted to its head ; for so they do, who love fervently, nor doth this my vileness deter Thee, O Eternal Majesty ; the floods of my sins shall not overwhelm the burning fiery torches of Thy charity ; nor the height and depth of my misery, the breadth and deep abyss of Thy mercy. Oh ! that, like as Thou desirest to come unto me, so I may ever run thirstily unto Thee, as a hart unto the water-brooks, and may drink and be inebriated even now, as I desire a thousand times, out of the cup of Thy so great and wondrous bountifulness. Amen.*

RULES IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE FERVOUR OF THE SAINTS.

FIRST, remember, as St. Paul teaches, that we are compassed about with this great cloud of Saints, the witnesses of our prayers and actions⁷.

Secondly, carefully observe the graces for which they were especially remarkable, and imitate them, and for this purpose read diligently the lives of holy men.

Thirdly, bless God's Holy Name for these His servants departed this life in His faith and fear ; beseeching Him to give thee grace so to follow their good examples, that with them thou mayst be a partaker of His Heavenly Kingdom.

Fourthly, remember that they pray for their fellow-servants and their brethren⁸.

Fifthly, embrace diligently the exercise of prayer. For the converse of the Lord burneth vehemently⁹ ; therefore if thou art lukewarm, and cold, draw near unto the Lord, speak unto Him Who is a consuming fire, thou that art dust and ashes.

Sixthly, in like manner as the children of Israel kept a festival of fire or Urim, on which they rejoiced amongst themselves and gave thanks unto God for the fire sent down from Heaven^b : so ought we, every hour, to renew and increase more and more thanksgivings for the grace of our justification and calling, and for His loving-kindness. For what can be sweeter ? what more profitable ? All human sense, and all joy, that joy surpasseth, which the soul taketh in Thee, Lord Jesus, not presuming of itself, but living in Thee.

⁷ Heb. xii. 1.

^a Psalm cxix. 140.

⁸ Rev. vi. 11.

^b Lev. ix. 24 ; 2 Macc. i. 18.

Ejaculations.

"Oh how plentiful is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee." Psalm xxxi. 21.

"Even before the Angels will I sing praise unto Thee: I will worship toward Thy holy Temple, and praise Thy Name." Psalm cxxxviii. 1, 2.

"Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God." Psalm xlii. 1.

"I stretch forth my hands unto Thee, my soul gaspeth unto Thee as a thirsty land." Psalm cxliii. 6.

"Hear me, O Lord, and that soon; for my spirit waxeth faint." Ps. cxliii. 7.

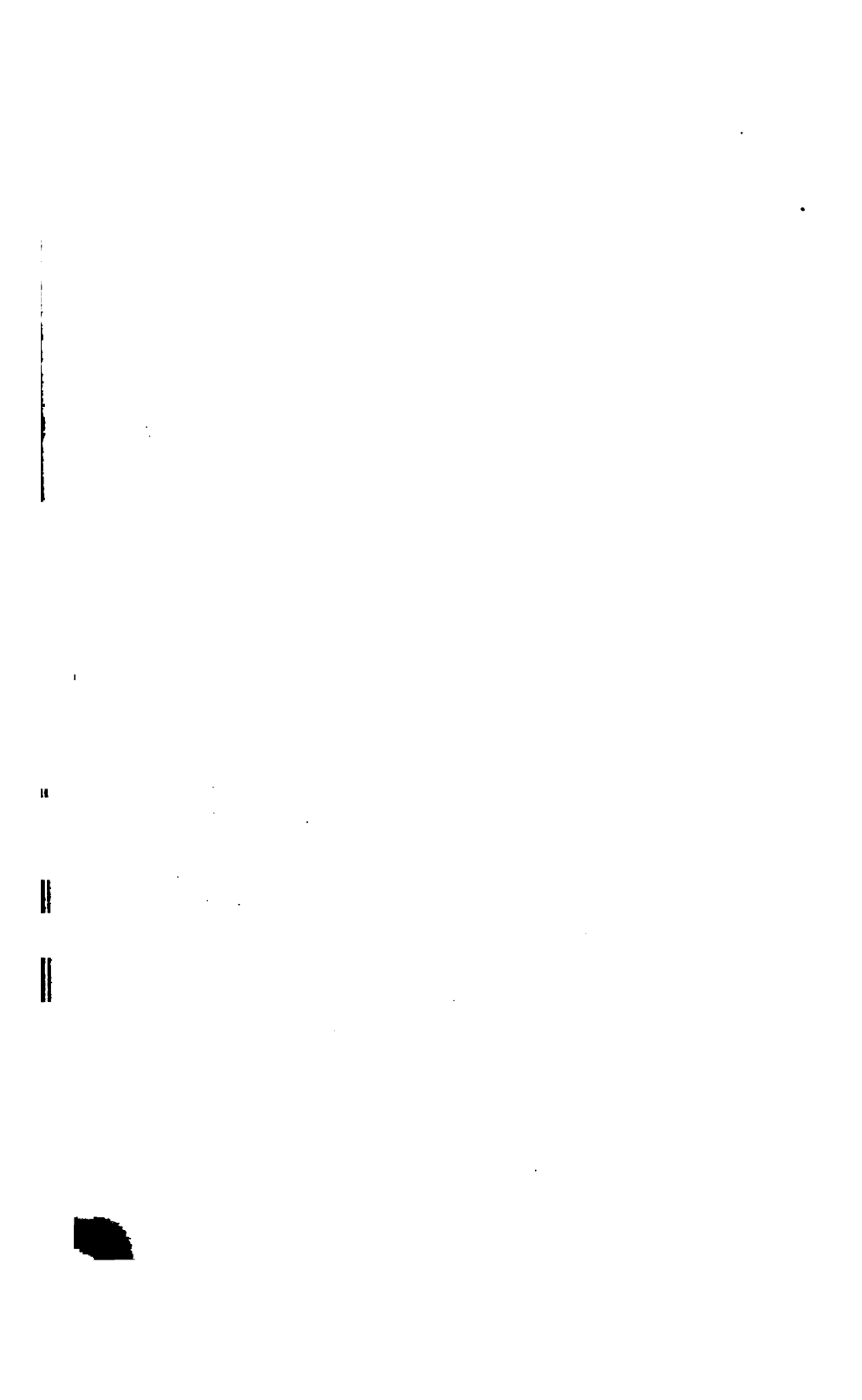
"The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree; and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus." Psalm xcii. 11.

IMAGE THE TWELFTH.

PITY THE CHURCH THY MOTHER, AND ENDEAVOUR TO SUPPORT HER
BY THY ZEAL AND INTEGRITY.

Consider the Church (A) that she is as it were the Mother of the Faithful, and that she is sore beset by enemies (B), by evil spirits, by bad men, by heretics, and idolaters, who oppose her by the sword and by the pen.—So that the devil is withdrawing and rending from her a great part of the World (C).—Behold her entreating from her own children (D) the aid of their Prayers, and demanding of them amendment of life: while she depends for her defence on the protection of the Holy Spirit (E) and His good Angels (F). And this Jesus Christ Himself, our most merciful Lord, requires of us, Who gave Himself for His Church, and hath committed to her the Book of Life and Keys of Remission; and hath graciously promised to be with us even unto the end of the world, although He well knew that by so doing He would be laden with many injuries; which it is our duty to avert by fervent piety.





Meditation

ON THE LOVE OF THE CHURCH, OUR MOTHER, AND THE CONSIDERATION
OF HER AFFLICTION, WHICH IS THE FIFTH INCENTIVE TO A HOLY
LIFE.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, first, how the Lord hath purchased the Church unto Himself, for a Bride, with the dowry of His precious Blood; and hath so loved her, that for her He vouchsafed to die; and therefore that His faithful servants ought diligently to fight for her, when girt about with enemies, and that with great valiantness.

Christ's love
towards the
Church.

Secondly, take notice how many holy and devout men there be in her, who are tossed about by well-nigh daily tempests of many troubles and persecutions. For all that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution^a; nor will the tribulation of persecution fail, if the observance of devotion fail not. Upon this point search out still higher and more deeply, if it please thee; and in the Old Testament too thou shalt find no one approved of God, who has not first been tried as gold in the furnace of tribulation.

Thirdly, take notice what persecutions the Church Universal suffereth throughout all the world, as well from Mahometans and heathens, as especially from heretics. What kingdoms have not all these made desolate? what holy rites have they not profaned? But most of all she suffers from proud prelates; who, saith St. Bernard, though they be the ministers of Christ, serve Antichrist, make use of the Lord's goods to walk abroad in state and honour, and give not honour unto the Lord^b; so that the Church may justly say, Lo, in peace was my bitterness most bitter^c; bitter was it in the first ages in the death of Martyrs, more bitter next in the contentions of heretics, most bitter now in the behaviour of them of mine own household. And Gregory, From none, in my judgment, dearly

The persecu-
tions of the
Church.

Wicked mi-
nisters the
most hurtful
of all.

^a 2 Tim. iii. 12.

^b Bern. Super Cant. Serm. xxxiii.

^c Isaiah xxxviii. 17. Vulg.

beloved brethren, doth God suffer greater injury than from priests, when He beholds those who were set for the correction of others, themselves furnish patterns of wickedness; when we, who ought to set restraints on sin, commit sin ourselves^d. Nor yet are religious societies free from guilt, many of which we see miserably torn asunder and deformed, and members of them, whilst they ought to be the salt of the world, to have lost their own savour; and when it was their place to lead amongst men the life of angels, and be eminent patterns to others, are themselves breeding many scandals, yea and become the very leaders of error.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that Christ Jesus out of His infinite love, hath given Himself unto His Church in that most august Sacrament of the Altar, that in this way also He might be with her even unto the end of the world^e, for the defence, and refuge, and consolation of all believers. See then now, to what injuries He hath thus exposed Himself in His love of thee, from infidels, and heretics, who are wont not only to tread Him under foot, but also to dishonour Him in a thousand ways, and with a thousand blasphemies^f. And would *they* alone did so! but alas! which is far more worthy of tears, from some who are Catholics, and priests, and from ungodly professors, though clothed in religious garb, He suffers like treatment; so that He may justly speak those words again concerning His own wounds, that they are "those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends^g;" for those who ought in duty to lay down their lives for their Lord, are the very persons who have made a gazing-stock of Him, and crucified Him unto themselves afresh. Now see how the subjects of an earthly King behave, when he, for their sakes, stands in the midst of the battle;—see how they strive to defend and protect him, yea even with thrusting in their own bodies between; and do thou do the same for Christ Jesus Thy King, yea rather for the Father, the Redeemer, the mighty Benefactor and Bridegroom of thy soul.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER how valiantly zealous for God and His Church the Macca-
The zeal of the bees were; and how after the Lord's death from the very the Saints. first there fought for her Apostles, Martyrs, and Doctors, and Saints, such as were Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine, and many others:

^d Greg. Hom. xvii. in Evang.

^f Heb. x. 29.

^e Matt. xxviii. 20.

^g Zech. xiii. 6.

following up heretics with their writings and with whatever means they could. With what carefulness, like good watchmen set in the Church's watch-tower, were they vigilant over their flock; and thus they stood valiantly not only in defence of souls, their chiefest care, but also in defence of the privileges of the Church, as Stanislaus, Thomas of Canterbury, and the like. Secondly, how deservedly great the glory that accrued to them hereby; for not only over fleshly enemies did they triumph, but over the princes of this world and the powers of darkness^b. Thirdly, how much some one zealous man can affect, of which you may call to mind many remarkable instances. Surely ^{How much one zealous man may do.} twelve Apostles were but a little band. A few men devoted to God have wrought more, and gathered more fruits than many thousands. With much truth was St. Ignatius wont to say, that no man knew how great things God might work by him through His grace, if he would but use that which was already given him. Give heed therefore to the Church thy mother, addressing thee in these wordsⁱ: "O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee in my womb, and gave thee suck, and brought thee up unto this age; I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider, that God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise. So shalt thou for His sake not be afraid of any tormentors; but being made a partaker worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren." For she bare us again unto the Lord, and also feeds us that we may live in holiness and righteousness before Him. Let us put on therefore the zeal of Mattathias, when we see the misery of our people^k. Lo! her holy things are delivered into the hands of strangers, our temples are become as a man without honour; her glorious vessels are carried away into captivity, her old men are slain in the streets, and her young men are fallen by the sword of the enemy: all her ornaments are taken away; our holy things, even our beauty and our glory, are laid waste.

Exercise.

The kings of the earth have stood up, and the rulers have taken counsel together against the Lord, and against Christ and His Church^l; therefore hath she wept sore in the night, and her tears were on her cheeks; among all her lovers scarce one is there to comfort her^m: she dwelleth among the

^b Eph. vi. 12.

ⁱ 2 Macc. vii. 27—29.

^k 1 Macc. ii. 7, 8, 9, 11, 12.

^l Psalm ii. 2.

^m Lam. i. 2, 3.

heathen, she findeth no rest, all her persecutors overtook her; between straits are her sons. For these things I weep, and mine eye runneth down with water, because her children are desolate, because the enemy hath prevailed^a. The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets, the virgins and the young men are fallen by the sword^o. How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire; her religious men, I say, some of them become apostate, and her priests. Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of some amongst her priests^p, Thy wrath, O Lord, hath been kindled against Thy people, and Thou hast abhorred Thine own inheritance^q; and lo! they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills^r. Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach^s. Truly our inheritance is turned to strangers: very many have given the hand to the Egyptians; servants have ruled over us, there was none that appeared to deliver us out of their hand. Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. Let Thine anger be turned away from us, because Thy children are forsaken, and such as be zealous for Thine honour are few amongst the nations. Hear, O Lord, our prayers and our supplications, that all the earth may know that Thou art the Lord our God, and that Thy Name hath been called upon Israel, and upon me^t. Behold, O God our defender, and

look upon the face of Thine Anointed! And oh, that this day, O Anointed Jesu, when I desire to receive Thee with more fervour and love than ever in all my life, O that all may understand that there is no nation so great^u, who hath God so nigh unto them as Thou, our God, art to us, not only in our prayers, but in these [here name some particularly] and all our infirmities, Who comest so often, to have respect unto, to heal, to defend me. If Thou, God, be for us, and with us, who shall be against us? Said he, My tears have been my meat day and night, while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God? These things I too have thought upon and have poured out my heart by myself, for that I so often eat of Thee, the Bread of Life, and yet live not to Thee alone; so often drink the cup of salvation, and am sickly still.

^a Lam. i. 16.

^p Lam. iv. 1, 2, 7, 8, 13.

^q Lam. iv. 5.

^r Psalm lxxxiv. 9.

^o Lam. ii. 21.

^q Psalm cvi. 39.

^s Lam. v. 1, 2, 6, 8, 21.

^u Deut. iv. 7.

Oh would that, would that in my life Thy bounty towards us might appear by our works, and that Thou wert unto us a pillar of a cloud through the day of vanity, and a pillar of fire through the night of this world^x ! Amen.

RULES FOR AIDING THE CHURCH IN HER DISTRESSES.

FIRSTLY, to prescribe to oneself, and offer up with that especial object some stated prayers, in behalf of the Church, and for Kings, and all those who are in a situation to advance greatly, or greatly hinder the public good. Thus when some one commended the king of Spain to him, St. Ignatius said, that he prayed unto the Lord for him three times a day with tears.

Secondly, for religious societies and institutions, because their prosperity is of the greatest importance to the Church.

Thirdly, to pray for countries and kingdoms infected with heresies, as also their guardian Angels do in Heaven, as appears from the Prophet Daniel.

Fourthly, to contribute to the utmost of our power to schools and seminaries, for the instruction and advancement in life of young persons, and for other such works of piety, either in the way of money, or by lending our own time and pains to these ends.

Fifthly, to maintain diligently the privileges of the Church, for which martyrs full of courage have even confronted death, as Thomas of Canterbury.

Sixthly, always to speak with reverence of our ecclesiastical superiors, and to shew them marks of respect; a duty so approved of by St. Francis, that he said he would salute a priest who should come in his way before even an Angel, if both met him at once.

Exhortations.

"Turn Thee again, Thou God of hosts, and visit this vine." Psalm lxxx. 14.

"Behold, O God our defender, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed." Psalm lxxxiv. 9.

"Remember us, O Lord, according to the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit us with Thy salvation, that we may give thanks with Thine inheritance." Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

"Deliver us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, that we may give thanks unto Thy holy Name." Psalm cvi. 45.

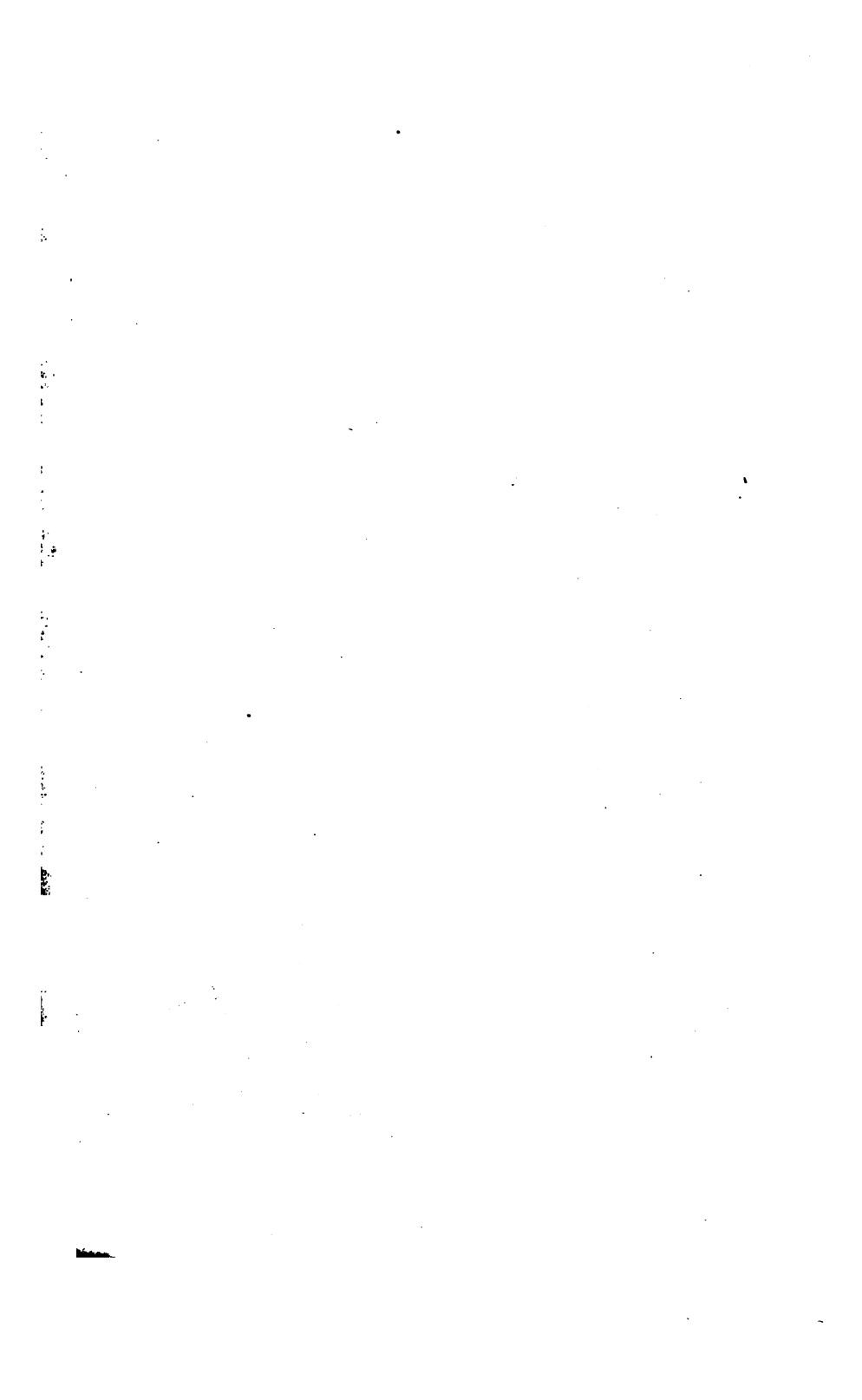
^x Exod. xiii. 22.

IMAGE THE THIRTEENTH.

WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT;
FOR THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR
WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOEST.

Consider the impenitent souls that are departed from the body (A); how earnestly do they wish for one hour that hath been lost; as the Rich man in the place of torment, how do they seem to entreat their friends that remain, that they lose not their time of probation, as they have done. His good Angel (B) whispereth even now to the Worldly man (C) of such that must be the thoughts of the dead, while he can contemplate them with unconcern. But the good man (D) ever seems to hear their judgment of things temporal; and hastens, before the night cometh, to do all things which he shall then wish to have done; seizing, while the time still lasteth, the Cup of Salvation (E): among the tombs of the dead (F) learning to know the value of the world; and remembering all those works of charity (G) which the Judge will bring forth on that day. How will the whisperings of his good Angel (H) return to the remembrance of the worldly man with tenfold power, when released from the body, and when such thoughts can profit him not! How will he then earnestly desire for one hour (I)! What will then be thy judgment of thy works, when the fire shall try each man's work, of what sort it is (K), whether wood, hay, and stubble, or gold and precious stone? How do the Angels, who see the two worlds, judge of these things, turning unto God, the only support of themselves and us (L)! Weigh well thy works, that thy judgment of them may be now, as it will be when the door is shut.





Meditation

UPON THE STATE OF UNHAPPY DEPARTED SOULS, THE SIXTH INCENTIVE TO A HOLY LIFE.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, what horror thou wouldst feel, if thou shouldst find thyself condemned to be burnt to death with great confusion before the face of the whole world; and what wouldst thou not do to have that kind of death exchanged for some other? Surely thou wouldst leave no stone unturned, nothing unattempted. And can it be, that a man believes that for every sin, even the smallest, the punishment to be undergone is both grievous and eternal; and yet that he will not so much as choose to forbear an idle word^a, or to subject himself to some small mortification here rather than treasure up wrath against the day of wrath^b? Consider if thou sawest thy relations or friends tormented in that flame, what wouldst thou then think? If thou heardest them crying and saying, Have mercy on me, and send some Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, what heart wouldst thou then have to fare sumptuously and to be merry^c? Hear them then now, when they cry again, Send him at least to my friends and my brethren, that they may not come to this place of torment^d.

The dreadful
punishments
of lost souls.

SECOND POINT.

ENQUIRE of them what they suffer, and why; and thou wilt be told, in the first place, that the pains themselves which they suffer are such in degree as no criminal ever, or Martyr, suffered in this life, as St. Gregory and Augustine affirm; yea more grievous than it is even possible for any to suffer in this life; and even, as Cæsarius says, greater than the most cruel tyrants should be able to devise, and

The actual
pains they
suffer how
great.

^a Matt. xii. 3, 6.

^c Luke xii. 19.

^b Rom. ii. 5.

^d Luke xvi. 24. 19. 28.

yet what doth not the malice of such men contrive? Secondly, they

The sense of loss over and above. suffer the sense of loss—and if here the absence of hope so dreadfully overwhelms the soul, what anguish thinkest thou

they must feel, who know themselves shut out for ever from the sight and embrace of the Christians' most loving Father and Bridegroom; and that especially, since when they were yet alive, they might at a cheap rate have purchased forgiveness for these sins, which now they can only expiate in the most exquisite torments. Oh how sad, they would send their friends, but can no longer go themselves, to God the living fountain! Yet are God's judgments righteous and true. And this even though there be differences as of sins, so also of punishment. Of which Cyril thus speaks, (in explanation of that passage referred to in St. Paul's writings^e.) that there are some sins so trifling, that they may be compared to stubble, on which the fire that is set to it, remaineth not long; others like hay, which though in themselves the fire easily consumeth them, yet does it abide on them longer than on the stubble; but others which are compared to wood, in which, according to the quality of the crime, the fire finds for itself abiding and substantial food.

THIRD POINT.

MARK well what offences they be, for which they suffer these things,

Why lost souls suffer these things. and you will find not only great and deadly sins to be of the number, but trifling faults, such as idle words, inattention at

Church, and devout exercises. Secondly, diligently enquire what judgment they pass now upon the pleasures and honours of this life. Thirdly, what folly would it be to neglect or forget the warning voices of the dead, and be careless either of our own souls, or those that are perishing all around. For what else doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God^f, to be diligent in alms, and prayers and fastings, and in receiving the Cup of salvation. Oh how diligently would they discharge these duties, if but one little hour of repentance were given them, to save their souls from these just yet grievous torments! Lastly, know that by God's just

A great aid to ourselves to be concerned for others. judgment, such as are unconcerned about the salvation of others, do grievously endanger their own; whilst, on the other hand, by the Divine goodness it is ordained, that "he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins^g." The prayers of those for whom we have prayed and wrought, shall also be offered up for us.

^e Micah vi. 8.

^f 1 Cor. iii. 12.

Exercise

ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD.

O Father of Mercies, and God of all comfort, have mercy upon us, Thy unworthy servants, for we are called by Thy name; let our sighing come before Thee; open Thy merciful ears, O Lord, and shew us again the light of Thy countenance. Just indeed are Thy judgments, neither is there any unrighteousness in them; for Thy mercy is over all Thy works. Spare, O Lord, spare Thy chosen people, and give not Thine heritage for reproach, that our enemies should triumph over it^s. Give me grace by prayers and fastings and good works to redeem the time, and if so be, let me be able to bring others also to Thine embraces. I know, of a truth, that when they shall have come to Thy kingdom, they will not forget me as Pharaoh's chief butler forgot Joseph^h; and that they who make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness shall, when they fail, be received by them into everlasting habitations.

Surely in vain do we hear the melancholy voices of the Dead crying, Have mercy on us; and with the eyes of faith behold the unrighteous in devouring flames and torments; except they warn us to repent, lest we also come unto that place of torment^l. Those hours, which flit away from us unemployed, how, if they could have them, would they now pass them! How diligent would they be, even in a little time, to make great gains in godliness! How would they receive Thee, drawing near to Thy table, that feast of fat things full of marrow^k! Out of their belly would flow rivers of living water^l, whilst Thou, the Ocean of goodness, and the Fountain of Life, wert in the midst of them. And I alas! drink of this water, and yet can thirst after broken cisterns. How then shall I be able to escape these torments? Must I not fear lest by my unconcern I am preparing such unto myself? Oh that from this moment I might begin by charity to extinguish these flames! Oh that, like Thy saints which shine like stars for ever and ever^m, I might even be worthy to free others from the lion's mouth, and to bring them also from darkness into the light of holiness! Have respect, Lord, unto this my desire, that both I, and they who lie perishing around, may live unto Thee;—and begin to sing a new song unto Thee;—and may receive the prize, and behold Thine immeasurable charity, and enjoy Thy wished for embrace, and the light of Thy most desirable countenance. I desire, therefore, by Thy grace, so to order my life, and to renounce the sumptuousness and vanity of this world, that I come not into the place of those torments; but

^s Joel ii. 17.^h Gen. xl. 23.^l Luke xvi. 28.^k Isaiah xxv. 6.^l John vii. 38.^m Dan. xii. 3.

that when I shall have put off this body of death I may come unto Thee, O Desire of mine eyes, O wished for Rest, Rest longed after a thousand times, my Joy, and my Glory. Amen.

RULES WITH RESPECT TO THE DEPARTED.

FIRST, a person must see to it, that pious bequests be not neglected.

Secondly, must pray to be partaker with the faithful departed.

Thirdly, may keep up the memory of departed benefactors and relations, thanking God for the benefits he enjoys by them.

Fourthly, as often as he passes through a church-yard, he may be thereby reminded and think solemnly of the Dead, and repeat or meditate on Psalms respecting them, as those which occur in the Burial Service, filling his heart with most grave and serious thoughts.

Fifthly, when he passes by a Court of Justice, let him think how he must also stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ.

Sixthly, let him imagine himself as the Dead now are, and suppose some survivor spending a passing thought upon him, as he now is upon them. This will shew him what a shadow here on earth is the life of man.

Ejaculations.

"Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and true is Thy judgment; but call to remembrance thy loving-kindnesses which have been ever of old." Psalm cxix. 137; xxv. 5.

"Why standest Thou so far off, O Lord; and hidest Thy face in the needful time of trouble?" Psalm x. 1.

"Consider, and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes that I sleep not in death." Psalm xiii. 3.

"If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?" Psalm cxxx. 3.





IMAGE THE FOURTEENTH.

SEE HOW BROAD IS THE WAY THAT LEADETH UNTO DESTRUCTION;
AND HOW MANY SOULS THOU MIGHTST RESCUE FROM THENCE, IF
THOU THYSELF WERT EARNESTLY BENT ON PERFECTION.

Consider how great is the number of those that perish (A); whom the Devil (B) invites; and at whom, hiding in ambush, he shoots his arrows (C), from the allurements of these vanities (D). The World (E) draws them on and impels them forward by means of her own laws; and (Oh! sad to think) there are those (F) who, even of their own accord, rush headlong to the place of perdition. Assist these (G) by thy example, by thy words, and by thy prayers. Alas, see how frail is the stay on which the Sinner confides (H). His "trust," as holy Job says, "shall be a spider's web"—spread over the bottomless pit beneath. See how the Angels of God (I) exhort thee to zeal for the souls of others! Yea, even Jesus our King Himself (K) is willing to come down to earth to deliver souls (L), that are in peril of the eternal woe. He sees and knows the dangers that encompass us, though we see and know them not: and oftentimes, while we think not of it, is He descending to succour and deliver us from the devouring flames.*

* Job viii. 14.

Meditation

ON ZEAL FOR MEN'S SOULS, THE SEVENTH INDUCEMENT TO A HOLY LIFE.

IMAGINE thyself in a position such as the Image represents.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER in the first place, the flaming gulphs and torments, in which so many thousand souls are being plunged perpetually, and from which they might have been snatched, and very many may yet be snatched, if only some one man of Apostolic holiness did but labour diligently to convert them. Secondly, look up and see, with what praises the souls of the Blessed give honour unto God, to their own exceeding comfort and the glory of their Redeemer. If these thoughts affect thy heart, take notice how much thou mightst increase that joy, and deserve well

Observe the
perils men's
souls are in,
and succour
them.

of souls, if thou didst but set thyself with nobleness of heart to bring sensuality, and those corrupt passions of thine (*here name particularly*) into subjection. Thirdly, observe in what peril the sinner is, for truly "his trust is as a spider's web."

SECOND POINT.

How great is God's majesty, how worthy to be feared and worshipped by all men! Secondly, consider how exceedingly He is desirous to save; so that He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and found in fashion as a man^b, that like a good shepherd He might carry home on His shoulders but one poor sheep^c. Thirdly, not only so, but He vouchsafed besides to undergo the most grievous torments, and most cruel death, that He might redeem souls by His blood, and purify unto Himself an acceptable people, zealous of good works^d. Fourthly, what is there sufficient for His measureless charity; for if it were needful, would He not deign for any single soul to de-

O how pre-
cious is a soul
in God's
sight!

^b Phil. ii. 7, 8.

^c Luke xv. 5.

^d Titus ii. 14.

scend from Heaven, and to drink up again the same cup of suffering, that so it might attain to salvation? See whether thou hast also in thee this zeal for God, and wouldst willingly be spent, thou and all that is thine, for the salvation of souls and the glory of God; or whether on the other hand thou canst not so much as give up the least morsel of profit or reputation, to save the souls alive that have been ransomed with the blood of Christ.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER first, the unwearied watchfulness of the devil, with which, as a roaring lion, he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour^e; and sendeth others also about in every direction, to ruin souls, and involve them with themselves in eternal punishment. ^{Be roused by the watchfulness of evil spirits.} Awaken thy own drowsiness by the thought of his watchful malice; and since his servants, whether men or devils, are so active and diligent to destroy souls, suffer not thine aid to be lacking to their assistance. Secondly, see with what enticements the fiend is wont to bait for wretched mortals, namely with some momentary pleasure or honour, which are mixed up too with many a bitter, and do in no way satisfy the appetite. Thirdly, weigh well these words, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me^f; for with what zeal oughtest thou to succour thy neighbour set in the midst of such great dangers, when our Redeemer reckons that which is done to him as done to Himself, as He will shew plainly at the last Day before the whole world?

Exercise of Zeal.

O Christ Jesu, Saviour of the world, Who hast redeemed us by Thine own Blood, and didst give Thy precious life unto death for us; behold, I beseech Thee, how hell hath enlarged her mouth without measure^g, and the way is made very broad which leadeth to destruction, and very many there be which go in thereat: but narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few that travel it^h. Therefore mine eyes do fill with tears, and my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earthⁱ; because our adversaries are the chief, our enemies prosper for the multitude of our transgressions;

^e 1 Pet. v. 8.

^g Isaiah v. 14.

ⁱ Lam. ii. 11.

^f Matt. xxv. 40.

^h Matt. vii. 13.

and they who should have offered themselves, as bulwarks, before Thine house, the princes of Thy people, are gone without strength^k.

O Jesu, my Redeemer, is it not a true saying, that Thy Bread which Thou hast prepared for me, strengtheneth man's heart, and Thy Wine maketh glad my soul? that Thy love is strong as death^l?

Application
to the Com-
munion.

Surely that it is which maketh Thee willing in me and for me so often as it were to be born and die, and in me to rise again; giving Thyself unto me, as a pledge of my salvation, and of Thine infinite love. Oh that, enkindled therewith, I may despise all things for Thy sake, and may (if need be) lay down my life for my neighbour, especially for mine enemies! I offer it, O Lord, unto Thee for them, and for whomsoever Thou shalt choose; yea, my whole self I offer unto Thee, for an whole burnt-offering,—for a tabernacle of Thine infinite mercy, and a place for Thee to dwell in. For Thou hast said, Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world! and I hope Thou wilt be with me for ever, because I desire to love Thee for ever.

O vain sons of men! O blind and slow of heart! If money perish, seas are crossed to save it; but souls unnumbered, Thine heritage, perish, and no man layeth it to heart^m. Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of my people! But it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not, and the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His merciesⁿ. For surely Thou hast borne our griefs, and with Thy stripes hast Thou healed our infirmities. Remember, that Thou stoodest, and standest even now, in the presence of Thy Father, to speak good things for us; and open, I pray Thee, the eyes of the blind, that they may know and love Thee;—the ears of the deaf, that they may hear Thy voice, O Shepherd of our souls; and have mercy upon all, for there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, the Lord our God.

RULES FOR THE EXERCISE OF ZEAL.

FIRST, to be an eminent example to thy neighbour; and to be diligent in observing all things which make for thy neighbour's edification. The clergy particularly, and such as are in any especial manner dedicated to God's service,

^k Lam. i. 5, 6.

^m Isaiah lvii. 1.

^l Cant. viii. 6.

ⁿ Lam. iii. 22, 31, 32.

ought so to behave, that men may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in Heaven.

Secondly, to introduce by the way pious discourses, and to check evil conversation, such as corrupts the morals. And in this judgment should be used, as in respect to warning others.

Thirdly, to admit no person into thy service, except on the express understanding that they are to be regular Communicants. The same rule may be kept in view in the selection of tradesmen or work-people.

Fourthly, to confer temporal benefits on men, in order to win them to some spiritual profit. Thus St. Ignatius when invited to join in some game, which he did not understand, consented to do so on condition, that the person who was beaten should be at the disposal of the successful party for several days, and in this way led the man he played with to devout exercises, and so to a good life. So, in other instances, we have known good people give alms, but not till they had obliged those who received them to listen to a short explanation of the Christian religion. Such Communicants as are in good circumstances have sometimes adopted the practice of choosing out each some poor Communicant, to give alms to, after they have received together.

Fifthly, to visit sick and afflicted persons, prisons and infirmaries, and to recommend godliness of life to those thou visitest; since men are never more ready to drink in wholesome teaching, than when they are visited with affliction, and receive kindness or assistance. Nor must such employments be thought beneath a Christian, who knows that it is nothing, as I may say, but the good word of the poor, by which he can be acquitted at the last Judgment.

Consider opportunities for enforcing religious practices.

Turn the adversities of others to account in thy zeal for their souls.

Sixthly, to give good books and pictures and engravings on religious subjects. Such presents may be useful even to the rich, who spend money enough in other matters, but are careless of providing themselves with such things as these.

Seventhly, to promote religious instruction, a charity previously recommended, and schools and asylums for orphans and widows; and to be more earnest for the practice of religion and the care of the soul in such institutions than even for that of the body.

Eighthly, to contribute to the support of such as are labouring for men's souls, and the propagation of the Gospel; for whoso receiveth and feedeth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. Thus the Queen of Portugal was induced by F. Xavier to apply the same sum she had been used to lay out in sandals, in winning souls to Christ. For in this way, one who is himself unable to preach or teach, or deliver religious instruction to others, often administers the same benefits with greater advantage through another. And just as any one who should maintain a teacher of heresy, or leave an endowment for one, would be chargeable with the blasphemy and destruction of souls which might thence ensue, to do the reverse of this is a practice to be altogether recommended.

Why not ransom souls with thy money?

Ninthly, if God has called any to so high a station in the commonwealth, that it is his business to create officers of state, magistrates, &c., to appoint to commands and the like, he must be told that it is his duty, both as to himself and others, to take religion into the account. For who does not know how apt people are to fashion their own conduct after the pattern and morals of their governors.

And though few are found so profligate, as to choose to exhort or compel their people and subjects to irreligion, and to invite them to crime both by word and example; yet surely it is a duty to avoid the scandal and public sin of such appointments. For if according to the true proverb, examples *draw* men along with them, precepts only *stir* men, it deserves serious consideration, how heinous each crime must be reckoned, when it draws very many with it to their fall, and involves them also in one ruin. And hence it is, that we find it said in the book of Wisdom, Mercy will soon pardon the meanest; but mighty men shall be mightily tormented^o; since it too frequently happens that those, who are the first in dignity, are far from being above others in godliness also.

Tenthly, what holds good as to state officers and magistrates, applies no less to military appointments. For if over and above the wonted licence of soldiers, the example of their commander draws them to sin, the extinction of any thing like godliness can scarcely be otherwise than certain. But since all rule is in the hand of God, and He giveth it to whomsoever He will^r, and from Him alone is victory to be looked for, it is evident that the profligacy or goodness of the commander may have no little influence upon the result of war. For if for one man's theft, Achan's, the hosts of Israel were defeated^a; what, I ask, is to be expected, if he who is in command should provoke God's anger against himself and his followers, by robbery, rapine, sacrilege, licentiousness, and pride?

Religious men to be appointed to place and offices of state.

Soldiers of good character, how important to success.

Exhortations.

"But be not Thou far from me, O Lord; Thou art my succour, haste Thee to help me." Psalm xxii. 19.

"Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog." Psalm xxii. 20.

"Lord, how long wilt Thou hide Thyself, for ever; and shall Thy wrath burn like fire?" Psalm lxxxix. 45.

"Lord, how long wilt Thou look upon this? O deliver my soul from the calamities which they bring on me, and my darling from the lions." Psalm xxxv. 17.

^o Wisdom vi. 6.

^r Dan. iv. 25.

^a Josh. vii. 12.





IMAGE THE FIFTEENTH.

PRACTISE THYSELF IN MEDITATING ON HOLY DOCTRINES, AND TAKE
FOR AN EXAMPLE THE MYSTERY OF THE NATIVITY.

Prepare thyself, and then select some subject for meditation, as that of the Nativity (A). Pourtray this, as a painter would do, in a heart (B) which Peace (C) sustains, that is to say in a heart which is in tranquillity and at peace. Consider it with all its circumstances. First of all, Who it is that is born (D). Secondly, what it is which is said or done on that occasion, and in what manner (E). Thirdly, where, and when it is (F). Fourthly, why and for what end (G), namely, that Adam and the human race might be rescued from death. Fifthly, collect inducements out of each of these particulars, to the practice of some Virtue (H). As thou mayst perceive that from each little chart in these delineations, there is a ray of light extending to Virtue. Now take hold of some Occasion (I), whereon thou mayst exercise this virtue; and shew thy detestation for the opposite Vice (K). Moreover, while engaged in this contemplation, stir up thyself to the affections of Gratitude (L), of Joy (M), of Admiration (N), of Compassion (O). Wherever thou art, exercise Faith, Hope, and Charity (P), deriving them in prayer from above. And observe how in all this subject of our meditation, Virtue (Q) shineth forth and is taught in mystery. And now consider the particulars of doctrine or precept (R), which are set before thee by the Divine Teacher in that holy seat of His instructions, the Mount of the Beatitudes; and endeavour practically to follow that Virtue (S), which they would point out to thee.

Meditation

ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, IN ORDER TO EXHIBIT IN A PARTICULAR INSTANCE A GENERAL METHOD OF MEDITATION, AND BY WHICH WE MAY STIR OURSELVES UP TO CHARITY.

IMAGINE thyself in the place represented in the Image.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER this great mystery in which the Son of God, the Eternal Wisdom, and Word of the Father, became an Infant of a day old upon the earth. Is it then to be believed, that God should dwell with men upon the earth? if the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee^a, how much less this manger? Truly a marvellous mystery is declared to-day; now may we cry out, that the courses of nature are changed. The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done His marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance. For what more marvellous work can there be than this, that remaining God, God hath been made Man, and the Eternal One, which is Wisdom Itself, hath been made an Infant of a day old upon the earth? And for what end? The Immortal hath been made mortal, that thou mightst live for ever.

Thy knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for us: we cannot attain unto it. Who hath known Thy mind, O Lord? or who hath been

Thy counsellor? Come then, and let us see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. Let us come boldly unto the throne of His mercy. For what canst Thou

deny unto us, O sweetest Jesu, Who hast vouchsafed to give unto us Thyself? or what can Thy Eternal Father deny us, Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all? Behold, behold, O Jesu, my Salvation, I was conceived in sin, and innumerable troubles are come about me. Yet will I not fear, since Thou, Emmanuel, art with us. Thou canst not deny me Thy gifts, Who didst

^a 2 Chron. vi. 18.

vouchsafe to open unto me the bowels of Thy mercy : whereby Thou, the Day-spring from on high, hast visited us. Grant unto me, O Lord, for the glory of Thy Name, that being full of Thy confidence I may serve Thee in joyfulness ; and may desire to please, and fear to displease none other but Thee, since Thou alone art all things unto me, O my God ; that I may love none but Thee, or but for Thy sake, since Thou art my One only Good, and hast deigned to have me in remembrance upon the high Throne of Thy Glory. For whom would not Thy charity and bounty kindle, most bountiful Jesu, which now appeareth, and melts us with its brightness and heat ? For Thy Majesty rejoiceth as a giant to run its course, and it goeth out from the uttermost part of the heaven and runneth about unto the end of it again, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. O measureless Charity which art my God, make me one with Thee, even as the Father and the Son are One^b. Verily I have great and continual sorrow in my heart, because my sins (*here name particularly*) have hitherto divided between me and Thee^c ; but cast them I beseech Thee behind Thy back, that I may be able to imitate Thy charity and humbleness ; and may perfectly express it in my conduct this day, on such and such an occasion, (*here name particularly*). For how can I have the heart to deny my assistance to my neighbour, how mean soever, when I look upon Thy Majesty, how It made Itself of no reputation, and took upon It the form of a servant, for our sakes, when we were yet enemies ? Is then the servant greater than his Lord ? wherefore, I beseech Thee, camest Thou to minister and not to be ministered unto ? Surely, that Thou mightest teach us charity, and mightest heal that most grievous wound, our pride. And can I then think it hard to follow Thy footsteps ? For who would have known the value of that charity on this earth covered with the shadow of death, where sin and ignorance abounded as a flood, except Thou hadst thus taught it unto us, O Lord my God, by Thy example ? Alas ! after that Thou hast deigned not by one instance, but by many to commend charity unto us, is it yet a hard thing to us to follow Thee, as soldiers our Captain, as servants our Lord, as subjects our King, as creatures our Creator ! Thine eyes have seen my imperfectness^d, have mercy upon me and hear me, for my soul trusteth in Thee alone. Give me perfect charity, that without any respect of persons I may strive to do good unto all, especially to mine enemies, for Thy name's sake. I beseech Thee, O God, remember how Thou wast born and diedst for us,

Charity towards which this Meditation is directed.

Contrition.

God's charity how great.

Admiration.

Self-reprehension and invitation to charity.

Self-questioning.

Few imitate Christ.

^b John xvii. 22.

^c Isaiah lix. 2.

^d Psalm cxxxix. 16. Vulg.

and despise not this my prayer and self-oblation. For I do offer unto Thee myself, to love Thee with sincerity, and every one that is my neighbour in like manner for Thy sake: for if I shall love my friends only, do not even the heathens so? I will therefore pray Thee, yea I do pray Thee, from the bottom of my heart, by Thy grace, for them which persecute me; I will do good unto them which hate me, that I may be numbered amongst the children of the Eternal Father, Who suffereth His sun to arise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. I know, that this is not of him that Distrust of self, and confidence in God. are we sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of Thee alone. Yet we see that this charity is the greatest safeguard and comfort of man's life: for a brother that is helped by a brother in this our difficult and perilous journey, is as a strong city^e, and nothing is more grievous than to be at discord with any. For what evil things are there which discord doth not give utterance to?

Consider the advantage of virtue, and the disadvantage of vice to the attainment of the end. Surely three ways it wearieth the soul; the thoughts and memory it filleth with foul imaginings; the tongue it sharpeneth, and steepeth as it were in poison; as it is written, Their tongue is a sharp sword^f and the deadly poison of asps; to which also correspond evil deeds, the fruits of malice.

What folly then and madness, to choose vice before virtue, folly before prudence, faint-heartedness before courage, injustice before justice, intemperance before moderation! for all these virtues meet in this one charity; and her fruit is most rich and sweet, in the memory, understanding, and will. But let us see, O my soul, what Take notice of opportunities of virtue. opportunities of the one or the other offer themselves unto us, that we may avail ourselves of these, abjure and detest those,

Do as thou wouldst advise another. (*here specify, &c.*); and truly who is there so unwise (except he be quite senseless and ungodly) that he would advise another, on any occasion whatever, to cherish resentment? What lime is to the wall, such is charity towards one's neighbour. The wall will be sure to fall without mortar; and he shall not be able to stand in the day of battle, whom charity doth not unite to his fellow-soldier.

What wouldst thou wish if on thy death-bed? But never doth this better appear than in the hour of death. For what Christian would then wish to fall out with another, when he is preparing to go before the Judge, Who with what measure we mete, will measure also unto us again?

What in the Judgment? For of a truth in the Judgment this one virtue will gain the day; since charity covereth a multitude of sins; and he

^e Prov. xviii. 19. Vulg.

^f Psalm lvii. 5.

shall appear naked, whosoever shall not be clothed in this wedding garment, and shall be cast forth into outer darkness^g.

This one grace therefore I ask of Thee, O Lord, this one thing, charity, I desire, yea and will desire for ever; or surely, (which do Thou forbid!) I shall be sorry that I have not desired it. I will strive, therefore, that no opportunity of charity may slip by me: that which in eternity I shall wish I had done, that I already purpose in Thy sight.

What in eternity wouldst thou wish thou hadst done?

This it is which hath made the Saints to commend this grace by their writings and examples: so that the disciple whom Thou didst love, good Jesu, above the rest, could preach of nothing else, but the law of charity; yea even heathens, on whom Thou, O Sun of Righteousness, hadst not risen, how often do they speak to us the praises of concord,—that concord, by which things that be little are made great?

And what peace of mind, what comfort in the Holy Ghost have not Thy saints experienced hereby, and do not all lovers of charity experience! Of a truth, this peace, which floweth out of true virtue, passeth all understanding, because in peace is the place made for Thee, most sweet Jesu. For where Thou art there joy in the Holy Ghost cannot but be, as tribulation and anguish must also be on every soul of man that doeth evil.

What peace springs from virtue.

What then, pray, can it be that should turn me aside from this virtue? Shall vain and filthy delights, such as may be drawn from the most foul lake of sin? These through self-love, seem to pour into our hearts an indescribable something of bitter pleasure; yet no sooner is it poured in, than it runs out again, and there remaineth but repentance, and disquietude, and anguish of heart. If delights please me, I see and know that from Thee, the most present Fountain of all good things, it is allowed me with virtue for my guide with joy to draw waters^h,—which whoso drinketh, shall still thirst for, but without pain; and shall be satisfied, yet be uncloyed; and shall rejoice in Thee, the Supreme Good. But nothing so pierceth my heart as Thy word and Thy example, whereby Thou hast applied this mark unto Thy children, for by this shall all men know that they are Thy disciples, if they have love one toward another. And shall I then dare to dislike any one, how injurious soever, by Thy permission, he may have proved towards me? For hither tend the manifold benefits with which, out of Thy boundless charity, Thou hast prevented me, and dost prevent me daily; for Thou wouldest draw us, O Thou lover of men, unto virtue by cords of loveⁱ. Oh how ardently ought I to embrace every virtue, which Thy Majesty setteth

No real reason why sin should be pleasing.

Look to Christ's teaching and example.

What benefits God invites us to virtue with.

^g Matt. xxii. 11—13.

^h Isaiah xii. 3.

ⁱ Hosea xi. 4.

Charity com- before me, when with Thy manifold benefits, as with arrows
mended. of love, Thou piercest mine heart? Surely it were the greatest ingratitude, when Thou askest this thing (*here name particularly*) of me, to refuse it unto Thee my Lord and God, and most bountiful Benefactor: this may Thy mercy put far from Thy poor servant! But, O Lord my God, even if it were not so, were it not better to serve Thee, the King of kings and Lord of lords, in the practice of virtue, than through sin to be sold for nought to our most bitter enemy, and to come under the very grievous yoke of a most cruel tyrant, sin, that is, and the devil? Ah! let not such a madness enter into my mind or the mind of any, that he should forsake his chiefest Good, and sovereign King; to join himself unto his greatest evil, and deadly enemy, enticed perhaps by
The vanity of men. a momentary pleasure. O blindness of men! alas for our senselessness! How deceitful upon the weights are the children of men! For Thou art most Mighty, most Wise, the Fountain of all good things, from Thy bountiful hand have all good things come unto us; Thou alone satisfiest and dost replenish our heart; in all places Thou art present; and virtue draweth me, Thy bounty inviteth me, and charity compelleth me, unto Thee. Therefore it is good for me to hold me fast by Thee, to put my trust in my Lord. Be still then, and know, O mortals, how sweet the Lord is, how worthy to receive glory and honour. O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme Mine honour, and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing? Be ye sure that the Lord, He is God, it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.

Alas! O Lord, these things I know, but I most humbly beseech Thee, give me to do what Thou commandest, and command what
Petition. Thou desirest. Thou commandest to love, this one thing grant unto me; and from the high throne of Thy glory have respect unto one that is toiling and shipwrecked in this sea, because the "wind is contrary" unto us. And see, O Jesu, see how our corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon heavenly things^k. Have respect, O Eternal Father, unto the charity of Thy Son, Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Unto His blood and merits have respect, which cry out for us poor wretches; and hear the prayers of Thy Saints also under the altar¹; that we may obtain the help of Thy grace, and be able to exercise the virtues necessary to us on this occasion (*name any particular occasion*). Suppliantly also I beseech Thee, O my God, that Thou wouldst deign to hear the groans of Thy Church, and to prevent all those (*here name particularly*) for whom I ought to pray, with the blessings of Thy sweetness.

^k Wisdom ix. 15.

¹ Rev. vi. 9.

Thou seest, how in the mystery of the Nativity, First, faith, hope, and charity are exercised. Secondly, how the circumstances of it may be used to elicit some instance of virtue: in order to which subsequently various incitements are applied to urge the will to embrace the same virtue.

The same thing may be done, as has been said above, by a person's taking some sentence for the subject of his meditation; or again by reflecting on some work of God's hands. For there This method may be used, whatever be the subject. is no one of them which declareth not the glory of God, and may not afford some lesson unto holiness of life. And therefore the sluggard is sent by the Wise man unto the ant, saying, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and consider her ways and be wise; which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man^m." But if thou be diligent, thy crop shall spring up like a fountain, and want shall flee far away from thee.

A METHOD OF MEDITATION BY ACTS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

Now hast thou had unfolded the method of enlarging thine affections, by resorting to various heads of this Divine Rhetoric; and hast seen different methods of meditation explained, and amongst them one hinted at, by which Faith, Hope, and Charity are exercised, being virtues which consisting in the knowledge of God deservedly claim the first rank. Since however this method is one of particular excellence, and at the same time is not as obvious as others, it seems well not to treat of it in a mere cursory way, but with some exactness. May the Divine Goodness, from Whom all good things and gifts do come, make it to be to the glory of His name and the salvation of souls!

First therefore, as I noticed before, all things which the Divine Power hath created, if we regard them diligently, may be made unto us the book of life: for the heavens declare the glory of God, and every creature uttereth these three words unto us, Receive, Render, Beware; Receive me as a gift from God, Render thanks unto Him,

Every creature the book of life to man.

^m Prov. vi. 6—11.

Beware lest thou misuse me unto the dishonour of the Giver, or make that to be unto death, which was granted thee to be unto life. For from every creature we may draw a lesson of life, and may consider this not only as spoken of God unto us, but as written also in living characters on the creatures. Again, whatsoever the Eternal Wisdom hath

All Scripture teacheth us. vouchsafed to reveal unto us, tends only unto this, that we should understand His will and counsels; that we, which are Christ's sheep, by His most pitiful compassion may both have life, and have it more abundantlyⁿ. This has He Himself vouchsafed to make manifest with that His mouth, with which He hath uttered things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world^o: For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect,

thoroughly furnished unto all good works^p. Whatsoever also

Every thing true is from God. hath had its origin in truth, and hath come unto us by means

of philosophers, or any wise men of this world, much more whatsoever hath come by Sacred Writers, hath come forth from Him, that He might shew the way unto Himself,—the truth, by which we might come unto life. For He alone is Himself the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. Lastly, whatsoever by any hath ever been rightly said or done, we may rest assured, hath been said or done by Him for our instruction. Of Holy Writ St. Paul thus speaks; Whatsoever things were written, were written for our learning. But what profiteth it that they be written, if, whilst we see the better and more wholesome way, we are unable to embrace it? Surely nothing at all: yea, rather would it be to our great hurt, to know God's will, yet be unable to fulfil it; to be shewn the way, yet be debarred from walking in it. Therefore the Apostle addeth, That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Hope of what? First of obtaining grace to do these things, which are written for our learning; secondly, of obtaining eternal glory, if we be rooted and grounded in love.

Therefore, when thou enterest on the Meditation of some mystery, the consideration of any of God's creatures, or ponderest on some text, and drawest out a lesson of life; first, awaken faith in that doctrine, as being propounded unto thee in that mystery, that Scripture, or, even if it be, that writing of man, (and especially in sacred things is this of force,) by God Himself. For whatever pertaineth unto truth, though it be met with in the writings of philosophers, is His, and hath proceeded from Him for our sakes. The same holds good, if thou receivest instruction unto salvation from looking upon any of His creatures. For whatsoever

ⁿ John x. 10.

^o Matt. xiii. 35.

^p 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

is in them, and flows forth from them, whether having respect unto this life, or unto salvation, and whether from Angel, or man, or irrational creature, certain it is, that it is from the great and good God, as being the Fountain of all good things: for it is not less of God, though of every day experience, that the ant speaketh, for I will call it speaking, unto the sluggard to teach him wisdom, than it is, though of uncommon experience, when Balaam's ass rebuketh and warneth the prophet.

Believe God therefore, for He is the Truth; believe the truth thus proposed unto thee; and the virtue, which is according to it, de- Faith to be termine with thyself to embrace. For example, in this text, exercised. Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: believe that so it is indeed, since the Truth saith it, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived: for that is the reason for believing.

Secondly, do not only however believe God, that is, Truth Who saith it, but as men do in respect to human faith as well as divine, weigh well the reason, why it is worthy of thy belief, and that Its credibili- ty to be con- sidered. in the highest degree, for the testimonies of the Lord are very worthy of belief^q: see, that is, why men believe any body. One reason surely, and which hath respect to those who believe, is because they are ignorant, blind and incautious. Another respects the party who asserts, his authority, sincerity, faithfulness. Another respects the thing itself, for just as any thing seems little worthy of belief, when it appears impossible and so to be repugnant to the Divine power, or at any rate, repugnant to the Divine Wisdom, and Providence, or Goodness: so when any thing is advisedly judged possible by reason, it appears worthy of belief. Now this is of great force in regard to the present subject. For the thing which is commanded or counselled, is the counsel of God most Mighty and most Wise, Who when He commands aught, gives also that by which it may be fulfilled.

Thirdly, exercise a devout affection of trustfulness, by which we cleave firmly to such things as faith propounds unto us. How, Devout affec- tion to be stirred up. sayst thou, must I do this? I answer, observe what things they be which turn men aside from the faith, and abhor them. The first thing, namely, is the persuasion and teaching of Abhorrence of such things as enfeeble faith. another, the devil or man. A second thing, is the enticements, and invitingness of the creature, by which a man being drawn away and enticed, concerning faith maketh shipwreck, as the Apostle saith of covetousness. A third thing is, tortures and adversities. Determine therefore, though the whole world, yea, as the Apostle saith, though an Angel from Heaven should teach any thing contrary, viz. to the things which our faith assures us of, to say Anathema unto him: how

^q Psalm xciii. 6.

much more to a man and to the whole world; let it flatter, let it threaten as it may, whether loss of goods, or character, or life be the penalty proposed, still believe and hold boldly to the example of the martyrs, whether urged by persecution or by flattery, evil things to be endured, or good things to be relinquished.

Fourthly, having thus exercised thyself in one point of faith, carry thy thoughts on to other subjects, for they are mostly the same things, which make all the testimonies of the Lord to be worthy of belief. Thou mayst therefore run through the principal mysteries and articles of faith: and lastly, in ending, or after thou hast ended thy meditation.

Consider this, fifthly, seriously with thyself; If I did believe truly, and had a lively faith, since without works it is a dead faith, A test of lively faith. what works should I perform of this or that virtue (*here name that concerning which thy meditation hath been instituted,*) and on this and that opportunity, which I have had so often, and even have now to-day.

The Exercise of Hope.

AFTER Faith exercised, stir up Hope. Dost thou ask how thou shalt do that? I answer, when thou seest the thing to be God doth not command, and yet deny strength. really commanded or counselled thee by God, by Goodness Infinite, I say, (for He teacheth not to undo thee, inviteth thee not to cast thee out, commandeth not so severely that it cannot be performed,) hope assuredly the grace required to fulfil it, in like manner also that thou shalt assuredly obtain both glory, and whatever is promised to him that is obedient to the commands and counsels of God, (such promises as thou seest made in the eight beatitudes and elsewhere,) and that because God is true to His promises, and with Him is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning. Observe however that two things are hoped for, strength or grace to labour in the vineyard, to run the race;—and the wages, or prize itself. And consider firstly, how the thing may be hoped for, as regards thyself, and what ground thou hast, (taking example by human things,) either of despair or hope; secondly, how in respect to the thing hoped for; thirdly, in respect to God, What things to be hoped for, and how to increase hope. from Whom it is hoped for. As regards thyself thou mayst *despair*, because too weak for arduous matters, for labouring in the vineyard, for running in the race. Secondly, because thou art unworthy, that He of Whom thou hopest them, should confer His gifts and favours on thee, since thou hast so often done outrage unto

Him, and art so ungrateful for His benefits. On the other hand men are wont to hope, if they are worthy, if they are acceptable to, or have bound to themselves by benefits conferred, the person from whom they hope any thing. This also accommodate to thy case, because God hath made us worthy to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints, acceptable to Himself, and vouchsafes to acknowledge that He hath received of us, that is to say, in respect to the alms we have given.

Secondly, men entertain greater hope in respect to the party they hope any thing from; First, when he has promised, and bound himself thereto. Secondly, when he hath granted thee, and many like thee, greater things, and that indeed out of his mere goodness, and because he is wont besides to make such things good of himself, and can do so if he will. Thirdly, when the promiser can be compelled to perform. But now hath not the Lord both promised, and granted already greater things, and is He not forced, so to say, and ravished with one of the eyes of His spouse^r, and doth not love prevail against Him? Did He not say to Moses, Let Me alone? and to Abraham, Can I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?

Thirdly, men despair in respect to the thing, when it is arduous and difficult; but on the other hand hope to be able both to do and obtain any easy thing: but the commandments and counsels of the Lord are not difficult and grievous, for His yoke is easy, and His burden light. And so far then of increasing and exercising hope, from the threefold respects on which any thing may be hoped for.

Fourthly, if after this thou wouldst still fain increase the affection of hope, reflect what things cast men down from hopes. Firstly, the persuasions of another, whether devil or man. Secondly, ^{What casts men down from hope.} flatteries, that they should hope for something else. Do thou, therefore, even though all should tell thee the contrary, though they should flatter thee to turn thee from the Lord, and though all should stand against thee, and the Lord should chasten thee, say still, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him^s.

Fifthly, neither hope alone for that which may be the present matter of thy thoughts, as for instance, humility, but extend thy hope unto all such things as are necessary to salvation.

Sixthly, reflect, what if you did really hope, you would do, and how: whoso hath no hope, doth not sow, doth not toil, doth not con- A text of lively hope. tend, as is plainly shewn in human affairs. On the other hand, whoso hopeth, ploweth, fighteth, toileth, runneth, that he may gain the prize: considerations which when virtue and religion are in question, put things plainly enough for us, as any one may see.

^r Cant. iv. 9.

^s Job xiii. 15.

The Exercise of Charity.

FOR the awakening and inflaming of charity, consider that the commandment or counsel given unto thee, or which any of God's creatures seemeth to suggest, cometh from God's boundless charity, and in order to thy greatest good and happiness, and receive it, as thou wouldst from a guide the path he shewed thee, truth from thy teacher, life from a master, medicine from thy physician, from a king or umpire of the games, the crown, and that when given for thine own single good and benefit. How mightily then ought the love of Him to move thee, Who did nothing in all that He did, desireth nothing in all that He commandeth, Who speaketh nothing, Who by any of His creatures suggesteth nothing but only for thy sake and out of His love towards thee, Who is thy Teacher, and Shepherd, the Guide of thy way, thy King and Maker! For His commandments are sweeter than honey, a lantern unto thy feet, and to be loved above gold and precious stones.

The commandment of charity. But thou, O soul, whom God hath loved with a free and spontaneous love, beware that thou love not this again for aught else but Himself, not with a mercenary love, or an eye to thine own interest or glory, but look only to His will, and love His will, His glory and honour.

Secondly, consider on what grounds men are wont to entertain love.

God loveth us with a disinterested love. First, because they believe they are themselves beloved. Oh how greatly hath the Father loved us, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; the Son, how greatly hath He loved us, Who was offered for us, because that so He willed, and Who laid down His life for His sheep; the Holy Ghost, how greatly hath He loved us, Who cometh unto us in the fire of love, and maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, that is, Who in His desire for our salvation causeth us so to make intercession. Secondly,

I have said above that faith and hope are increased, the more the thing they respect is worthy to be believed and hoped for; so too is charity and the love of God and of His will, because He is Himself so worthy to be beloved. And worthy to be beloved He is indeed, as well for His own sake, and as supremely Perfect and Good, as for the benefits He hath bestowed upon thee, and those too which He hath prepared for them that love Him.

How love ariseth.

God, how worthy to be beloved.

Thirdly, see what things they be which may turn thee aside from love, by flattering, threatening, persuading thee; and mark well how strong thy love should be. For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel

as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame^t. Many waters cannot quench love. Though therefore all the goods of the world should entice thee, though all its evils should hedge thee in and trouble thee, though even all angelic spirits persuade thee; yet love thou God, for He only is good, and worthy to receive love and glory and honour.

Abhor whatsoever hindereth love.

Fourthly, take heed that thou love Him with an individual love, for with an individual love He hath embraced and doth embrace thee. For whatsoever is wrought or done, or said or permitted of God, that reckon as said and done and permitted for thee only, and for love towards only thee, for towards each individually God inclineth with love as great as to all collectively; in either case, that is, with a love that is infinite, unutterable, incomprehensible.

Note well that God hath done all things for thy sake.

Fifthly, reflect, if thou didst really love God, after what manner thou wouldst think and speak and act: for the love of God is not idle: for it worketh mighty things if love it be at all, but if it will not work it is not love^u.

The test of charity.

A shorter Exercise of Faith.

O Truth, O Goodness, I believe Thee, Thou that art here and every where most present unto me: and that these things (here name them) and whatsoever things have been written, done, and spoken, are for my learning: and I profess this with all assurance before Thy heavenly court, and that I were without excuse, if I believed them not and did not shew it through Thy grace, by my works. Thou art most Powerful, most Wise, most Good, and shall I not believe Thee? and shall I not embrace these (here name them) testimonies of Thy will? Very sure are they, and worthy to be believed and loved, whether I look into or hear reason and wise men or the nature of things. Oh that I had always hearkened unto Thee, O my every Good, and had never offended Thee! O that I had honoured Thee in my life, and by my patience had shewn my faith! Howbeit, from henceforth, I will ever believe and love Thee in deed and in truth. Deal with me as shall seem good unto Thee: I by Thy grace, when I shall know Thy will, will do it, out of my inward love toward Thee, and whatsoever Thou hast revealed for my salvation; and all Thy good pleasure will I embrace, O my Life, and my every Good. Amen.

God's Commandments worthy to be believed.

Resignation of self.

^t Cant. viii. 6, 7.

^u Greg. Hom. 3. in Evang. iii.

ejaculations.

"All things and these too are possible to him that believeth. I believe, therefore, O Goodness, O Truth, help Thou mine unbelief."

"Thou hast said, O Truth, If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. And wilt Thou, O Truth, deny me in this thing Thy lively faith."

"O Jesu, I know that faith without works is dead, and without faith it is impossible to please Thee; increase, I beseech Thee, my faith, that I may please Thee, and live unto Thee, and love Thee for ever."

A shorter Exercise of Hope.

Thou knowest, O my God, Thou knowest that we are not sufficient of our-
Humbling of self. selves to do any thing, as neither this thing (here name the thing) as of ourselves. Therefore I, that am dust and ashes, flee unto Thee, that by Thee, and by patience and comfort of the Scriptures I may have hope, and hoping in Thee may not be confounded. For dost Thou, O Goodness, thus (here name the object) call me, and wilt Thou turn me back? Dost Thou thus invite and draw me to Thee, and wilt Thou suffer me to faint by the way? Hoping in Thee, O Lord, I know I shall not be powerless for ever, though I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and though I be unworthy of Thy favour. But
God's benefits and promises another hope. Thou, Who hast given Thy own Body and Blood for my price, and art ready to-day to give Thyself unto me, for a pledge of my salvation, and Who hast prevented me with so many benefits, (here name them,) and hast so often commanded us to ask, and hast promised to give; O Goodness, O Truth, Thou wilt surely give unto me that which I shall ask, viz. that I may hope in Thee with all my heart; and though Thou slay me, in Thee, O my Hope and Life, will I trust; though the hosts of this world and of vanity rise up and cry out against me, yet shall it be my portion thus (here name it) to keep Thy law, and to follow Thee: for whither shall we go from Thee, Good Jesu, hast not Thou the words of eternal life?

ejaculations.

"Thou hast said, O Lord, and so it is, 'without Me ye can do nothing;' what therefore remaineth unto me, but that I should ever lift up mine eyes unto Thee, and that Thou shouldst help me."

"Thou hast been my succour : leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. I am become as it were a monster unto many ; but my sure trust is in Thee."

"In God is my health and my glory : O God, the rock of my might and my trust, help me ; for it is time that Thou have mercy, yea the time is come."

A shorter Exercise of Charity.

O Charity, O my God, give me understanding, and I will learn Thy commandments, whether by epistle, or by creatures of Thine Thou speakest unto my heart. For whatsoever I learn unto salvation, it is Thou, ever most present unto me, that out of Thine infinite love teachest it unto me, O my Health and Medicine of my soul. And how great, how great the love wherewith Thou teachest it unto me, who am God teacheth us out of love towards us. nothing before Thee ! Dost Thou need my goods, that with such free and spontaneous love Thou shouldst prevent me with so many good things and with Thy charity ? For Thou so lovedst the world, Eternal Father, that Thou gavest us Thine Only-begotten Son ; and Thou so lovedst it, O most gracious Jesu, Son of God, that for me Thou gavest Thy The greatness of God's love. precious life unto death, and can then Thy commandments and counsels be grievous unto me. I will love therefore these things (name them) and Thee, O God my strength ; O how good is it for me to hold me fast by Thee ! What therefore shall be able to separate me from Thy charity ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or persecution, or the sword ? For Thy love is strong as death ; and many waters, so I trust, shall not be able to quench Thy charity, the fire, that is, that Thou comest to send upon the earth, and wouldst have to be vehemently kindled. Resignation of self.

Ejaculations.

"Though I have all faith that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing : inflame me therefore with Thy love, whose fire is in Zion and furnace in Jerusalem, and it sufficeth me."

"Thine Apostle said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved and thine house ; save me therefore, and grant me to love Thee, as Thou hast loved me."

"Thou so lovedst the world, O Lord, that Thou gavest Thine Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish ; and shall I, whom Thou so lovedst, be able to perish and not to love Thee, O Charity, O every Good, or to love aught but Thee ?"

IMAGE THE SIXTEENTH.

IF THOU WOULDST ATTAIN UNTO THAT GRACE WHICH THOU DESIREST, PUT THY TRUST IN GOD ONLY, AND DISTRUST THYSELF.

Although thou mayst have determined to seek after Virtue, as observed in the Contemplation of that mystery which we have considered, and to follow Christ (A): yet, alas, the World (B) and the weight of corrupt nature will hold thee: and perhaps in addition to these, thou wilt be pulled backward by the Chains of Sin (C). But put thy trust in God, and Christ shall liberate thee (D) by His grace; and will point out unto thee the way to Virtue (E). Without the aid of His grace man is like an Infant (F), who is unable either to rise, or to stand, or to defend, and feed himself, or even to seek those things which he needeth from another. Have no confidence therefore in thyself, but put thy trust in God only, and His grace; as the holy David did (G), when he overcame Goliath the Philistine, not with a sling and a stone, but in the Name of the Lord. And take care in thus adventuring with the sure aid of God, that thou art by no means of a doubtful mind, lest with St. Peter (H) thou beginnest to sink on account of the weakness of thy Faith.



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Meditation

CONCERNING CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AND DISTRUST OF SELF TO BE EXERCISED IN EVERY PRAYER.

IMAGINE thyself in a place such as is represented in the Image. And let thy petition be for this grace.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, how great is the weakness of man, so that although he may see and approve the things that are more excellent, yet either through love of the world, or by the force of nature, or because he is held back in chains by the evil spirit or some wrong habit, he cannot follow them; excepting by the especial grace of God assisting him. For no man can come to Jesus, except he be drawn by Him: and this the spouse expresseth when she saith, "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments; Draw me, we will run after Thee^a;" therefore distrust thyself, and put thy confidence in God. Consider in the second place, that man is as it were an infant surrounded with enemies, and exposed to injuries from them: for as he is not able to defend himself, nor, if he be filthy to cleanse himself, nor if he fall to raise himself, nor if he be set on his feet to stand save by another's aid: if hunger or thirst oppress him, he cannot seek food: nor which is of all things the most miserable is he capable of demanding aid in these his wants. To such a degree is man insufficient of himself to do any thing as of himself, or to say, "Lord Jesu, but by the Holy Ghost^b." See then how well the Lord doth admonish us, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." For he alone who knoweth himself to be such, and so esteemeth himself, cometh unto the Lord, Who saith, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.—In the third place, consider how resigned is such a little child,—

^a Song of Solomon i. 3, 4.

^b 1 Cor. xii. 3.

how free from anxiety with respect to food, clothing, and habitation; he thinks not of such matters: himself free from care, he leaves all care of himself to others: learn then to imitate him, and commit all things to the Divine goodness.—In the fourth place, reflect how the Lord, after the manner of a most gentle mother, most lovingly affords His succour in all these troubles of infancy; so that He with reason saith in Isaiah, As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. I will extend peace to her like a river, and glory like a flowing stream: these shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees^c. And, Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands^d.

Every one
ought to re-
sign and com-
mit himself
to God.

God as a
mother.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER with a quiet mind, that all things which thou seest here in the whole world, have from God their existence, their preservation, their power of working; that from Him, and through Him, and in Him we live and move and have our being. As the Apostle speaketh, In what then canst thou confide, and what art thou able to give to thyself? In the second place, reflect in faith that it is most certain, that we, without God and His especial grace, can effect nothing towards salvation, according to that saying, Without Me ye can do nothing; that it is He that worketh all things in all, and affordeth unto each severally as He willeth. Believest thou these things, and hast thou confidence in thine own goodness? In the third place, consider how greatly it displeaseth the Lord, that man should place his hope in himself, or in any thing else but in His own goodness. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh^e, and he who trusteth to his own thoughts does nothing. In the fourth place, consider that all who trust in themselves are deserted of God; even as Goliath was overcome by David, who came in the name of the Lord; and as Nebuchadnezzar became a beast. To which effect the prophet warned Amaziah when he thought that war depended on strength of armies; O king, God hath power to help and to cast down^f. This the Israelites learned by experience, when they in great numbers were overcome by a few of the tribe of Benjamin, because, says the Scripture, The people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves, and set their battle in array^g.

He that trust-
eth in him-
self is de-
serted of God.

^c Isaiah lxvi. 12, 13.

^d Isaiah xlix. 15, 16.

^e Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

^f 2 Chron. xxv. 8.

^g Judges xx. 22.

It is indeed altogether the opinion of St. Basil that no man is overcome by any temptation, unless he trust in himself more than is right. And Ricardus saith, it is impossible for any man to overcome himself who hath not by experience learned that he cannot obtain such a triumph by his own strength, and the Lord is wont to send temptations until a man hath come plainly to understand this.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER how confidence in God setteth man free from all evils: "Call upon Me," He saith, "in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me^h." And again, how even the mere want of sufficient confidence in God is the cause of heavy calamities: it was on account of this that Moses from hesitating at the waters of strife, was excluded from the land of promise: and Peter began to sink, who had before been able to tread upon the waves, while he put his confident trust in God. In the second place, enquire the cause of this, and thou wilt find that when man distrusteth God he seemeth to trust in himself the more, as though infinite Goodness were not willing, or infinite Power were not able to deliver, or to afford that which He wisheth to bestow, or that another can do that which God Himself refuses. Consider in the third place, with how great love the Lord offereth Himself as Guide to any one who is willing to enter the way of salvation: I am, He saith, the Way, the Truth and the Life. He offereth Himself, not only that He may shew the way, but also that as the good, and best of shepherds, He may bear on His own shoulder His tender little one, the wandering and weak:—and shall I not follow Thee, shall I trifle with Thee? O Goodness, O unbounded Charity, when Thou art desirous that I should, and I am able to do so? In the fourth place, reflect on what the Lord is; that although He hath been provoked by man, by very many sins, yet as soon as any one shall have come and given up himself to follow Him, that He remembereth no more the things that are past: but as He hath shewn in the instance of the prodigal son, He embraceth and comforteth him, and putteth on him the best robe that He hath. Lastly, remember that Jesus is ever present before the face of His Father Which is in Heaven, that there as the best of all advocates He may intercede for us, and Whose prayers cannot but be heard for His pietyⁱ, when offered in our behalf, if we as His sheep hear His voice.

^h Psalm l. 15.ⁱ Heb. v. 7. *Marg. reading.*

Hope liber-
ateth from all
evils.

Jesus most
lovingly in-
viteth us to
follow Him.

A Short Prayer.

Behold, O God our Defender, and be Thou my strong-hold whereunto I may always resort ; in Thee, O Lord, I believe, in Thee I hope, and Thee with my whole heart I love, O my God. Be not Thou far from me, Thou art my succour, haste Thee to help me. I am bought with Thy blood, but standing in slippery places, and girt about with the snares and pitfalls which my own soul hath occasioned. Draw Thou me unto Thee, with the cords of Thy love. O that I had wings like a dove, so that I might fly unto Thee, and faint no more ; that by Thy grace I may so follow Thee, my Shepherd, and cleave unto Thee with my whole heart. To Thee, O Jesu, hath this poor one been left : O Father of mercies aid me I pray Thee, me an orphan, for without Thee I can do nothing. For Thou art my God, my one and only Hope, my Helper, my Defender, the Horn of my Salvation, and Lifter up of my head.

A Longer Prayer.

Thou callest me, O Lord, to follow Thee, and callest me most lovingly, not by sign only, nor by motion, nor by the whisperings of a light breath of air, but by the strong crying of Thine own example, of Thy tears, and of Thy blood. In such-wise Thou callest even me a slave, yea invitest me by the hand-writing not of death but of life, by which Thou dost promise eternal things, if I will follow. Do I believe this ? Oh, how powerfully, how lovingly doth Thy word, Thy tears, and Thy blood draw me unto Thee ; and Thy heart speaketh unto my heart. And yet how is it thus ? how is it that my heart in the midst of my body is not like melting wax^k, and that my lips have not trembled at giving utterance to Thy words ? Is it not great glory that—should thus be allowed to follow his Lord ? But, alas, my God, wretched man indeed that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, this which weigheth down my soul, so that I cannot follow Thee, and attain unto all good. I delight indeed in Thy law after the inward man : but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Lo the good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I wish to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, and to run the way of Thy commandments, and will imitate Thy goodness.

But what is it that holdeth me back ? Vanity of vanities, the vanity of this world, and this corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly

^k Psalm xxii. 14.

tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things¹, and wisheth to ascend unto Thee. O Lord, I beseech Thee behold my affliction, see how they are increased that trouble me: many are they that rise against me. They are come about me like bees, and are even as the fire among the thorns: but in Thy Name, O Lord, shall I not destroy them? I am thrust sore that I might fall, but the Lord is my help^m. For what creature shall not be again dissolved into nothing without Thee, in Whom all things live, and move, and have their being? What man frail and weak can stand without Thee on the slippery ground of this life? I beseech Thee, Who art my hope, let not that foot of pride come against me, that I should trust in my own strength, for in that case I cannot stand. For I am sure that without Thee I am nothing, know nothing, and can do nothing, set as I am in the midst of enemies, in the midst of snares and of troubles. Thou, O Lord, workest all our works in usⁿ, this I know: and I will not trust in my bow, it is not my sword that shall help me. "The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass." "The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation: for in Thee I shall discomfit an host of men, and with the help of my God I shall leap over the wall."

Man standeth on slippery ground.

It is God that girdeth me with strength of war, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like harts' feet, and setteth me up on high. He teacheth my hands to fight, and mine arm shall break even a bow of steel. I will follow upon my enemies, and overtake them, neither will I turn again until I have destroyed them: I will smite that they shall not be able to stand, but fall under my feet. Blessed be the Lord my strength, Who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. This is my God, my Saviour, He is my defence so that I shall not fall. He shall deliver me from the snare of the hunter, and from the slanderous tongue. For how canst Thou forget me, whom Thou hast graven upon the palms of Thy hands^o. Thou canst not, even though a mother forget her sucking child. Through Thee will we overthrow our enemies, and in Thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us. It is Thou that savest us from our enemies, and puttest them to confusion that hate us. O Lord, O Lord, my safety, make me safe, for Thou knowest that I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in^p.

I will thank Thee, for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation; Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee. O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done, and will do for my soul. Are they not

Application to Communion.

¹ Wisdom ix. 15.

^m Psalm cxviii. 12, 13.

ⁿ Isaiah xxvi. 12.

^o Isaiah xlix. 16.

^p 1 Kings iii. 7.

great things indeed, immeasurable, infinite, incomprehensible, unsearchable? For truly to-day, O my soul, the Lord hath done great things for us, and why do we not rejoice? Jesus will eat His passover with us, yea He will be Himself our passover; and this is the passing over of the Lord. Lord, abide with us, for it is towards evening and the day is far spent^a. Behold my enemies have come about me helpless, and what shall I do, or rather what wilt Thou do? Like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God; but let the righteous be glad, and rejoice before God; the poor shall eat, and be satisfied, let them also be merry, and joyful, for in Thy Name, O Jesu, will we tread them under that rise up against us.

O put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them, but in Jesus my God; neither is man strong in his own strength: and God doth not delight in any man's legs, and cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm^r. But O good Jesu, my strength and my praise Thou art, and art become my salvation. The Lord is my strong rock, and my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might, in Whom I will trust, my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge: my Saviour, Thou wilt free me from iniquity. I will call upon the Lord, so shall I be safe from mine enemies. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Thee^s, for Thou shalt light my candle, O Lord, and Thou shalt make my darkness to be light. Thou art my shepherd, Who I hope knowest me, Thy wandering sheep, and wilt bring me back on Thy shoulders to the eternal pastures. Thou wilt speak for me good things in Thy Father's sight: Thou only art my refuge, my Helper, my Defender against my wrathful enemies. Behold their pride, and have regard to my low estate. Look, O God, upon the face of Thine Anointed, and shew Thyself, for Thou never failest them that put their trust in Thee, but those who trust in themselves, and bringest down those that glory in their own might. The poor man committeth himself unto Thee, Thou Who searchest the heart, and all our ways. Lo I am poor, and helpless, and fatherless. Take Thou the needy from the dust, and lift Thou the poor man out of the mire of these imperfections (here name them); raise Thou him that is poor, that he may be well-pleasing to Thee in it, and may sit with princes, and may occupy the throne of glory, and may love Thee as I desire, and may praise Thee, and glorify Thee, for ever and ever. Amen.

^a Luke xxiv. 29.^r Jer. xvii. 5.^s Jer. ix. 23, 24.

RULES FOR OBTAINING CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AND DISTRUST OF SELF IN
ALL PRAYER AND ACTION.

FIRST of all, consider how many undertakings in various matters have turned out ill, when to all appearance thou hadst concerted thy plans most carefully.

Secondly, attempt nothing without having first obtained the favour of God, and having sought by prayer for the Divine blessing, for without the grace of God we can do nothing. Therefore, before you enter upon business of any moment, exercise at all events contrition, and call upon God, saying, O God, make speed to save, Lord be Thou my Helper. A verse which, Cassian says, the Fathers in old time were often wont to use.

Thirdly, give thanks to God for success, and do so if thou canst by drawing near to the most holy Sacrament. Never attribute any thing to thyself, but to God, and that too testify sometimes by express words. For as persons in Religious Orders have avoided even the words "*mine*" and "*thine*;" so, for all it is suitable that no man should appropriate and ascribe any thing to himself, but that the injunction may be fulfilled that if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified¹.

Fourthly, twice every day in self-examination, or at least once, give thanks to God, and receive every good and every ill as from His hand.

Fifthly, arrange beforehand either in the morning or over night, what things are to be done during the day, and for each thing ask help with deep humility and distrust of self.

Sixthly, ask no benefit of man until thou hast first humbly sought it of God, the free giver of all things, and so to speak, hast thus obtained it of Him, for men are but His dispensers. God Himself is the Lord, without Whom men cannot dispense favours, however desirous they may be to do so: neither can they withhold any thing from thee, when it has seemed good to His Divine goodness to grant it.

In the seventh place, moreover, it tends towards distrust of self in one's own matters not to lean on one's own prudence, but on the Divine foresight, and in addition to ask in humility the counsel and aid of others. It is assuredly a sign of great arrogance and self-confidence, that a man should think that wisdom dwelleth with himself alone and should seek advice of no one, or in doing so, merely apply to those who would rather praise and flatter his own counsels than direct him. On the other hand, it is certain that man is distrustful of himself, and is trustful towards God, when he depends on the goodness of another rather than on his own. The effect of this in such dispositions is that they become resigned to all the commands of their superiors: they decline nothing, they are ambitious of nothing when they are thus distrustful of themselves.

Ninthly, this also is a sign of distrust of self and an instance of the practice

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 11.

of it, never to say, "I will do," "I have done," "I promise," with strong asseveration, but rather to say "I will accomplish so and so by the grace and help of God," "I will grant it if God shall deign to vouchsafe His aid," and at the same time to lift the heart unto God, and to ask His help.

Æjaculations.

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise." Of Thee and in Thee, and for Thee are all things, my God, my all. Psalm cxv. 1.

"Thou hast been my succour, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." Psalm xxvii. 11.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O Most Highest." Psalm xcii. 1.

"Every day will I give thanks unto Thee, and praise Thy Name for ever and ever." Psalm cxlv. 2.

"All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy Saints give thanks unto Thee." Psalm cxlv. 10.

"I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me." Psalm xl. 20.

"Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, and Thy blessing is upon Thy people." Psalm iii. 8.

"In Thee I shall discomfit an host of men, and with the help of my God I shall leap over the wall." Psalm xviii. 29.

"Preserve me, O God, for in Thee have I put my trust; O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, my goods are nothing unto Thee." Psalm xvi. 1, 2.





IMAGE THE SEVENTEENTH.

CONSIDER, AND WEIGH VIRTUE WITH VICE, AND ASCERTAIN
THE NATURE OF EACH.

Art thou desirous to arouse thyself more to the attainment of Virtue (A)? see how she outweigheth Vice (B) and the whole World, with whatsoever it hath to bestow. Virtue promiseth and pointeth out to thee the praise and rewards of God: Vice, the chains of slavery and punishment; for he that doeth sin is the slave of sin. Virtue healeth and strengtheneth the powers of the soul; Vice woundeth with a triple weapon,—in thought, understanding, and will,—and destroyeth. Give heed to the Occasions (C) of each, embrace each handle of Virtue, and avoid that of sin; for it is Occasion that leadeth thee to every Virtue, or every Vice, and being bald behind cannot be seized when once she is past. Consider how all Virtue (D) leadeth thee on, as by the hand; and maketh thee light and winged towards heavenly things, as in the case of voluntary Poverty (E), and helpeth thee forward on the strait way that leadeth unto Salvation (F). But Sin (G) draweth away from the road to Heaven; and the World (H) and the love of the world and of riches urgeth thee through crooked paths; and so burdeneth thee as to render thy step as slow as that of the tortoise. What therefore? beyond all things let the reflection be ever brought before thy mind, for what end thou wast created (I), and that in order to attain that end, Virtue and all things that appertain unto her can alone aid and promote thee. “Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss.”

Considerations

ON THE FIRST MEANS OF INCREASING MEDITATION, AND ITS FRUITS;
OR A MEDITATION ON THE WEIGHING OF VIRTUE AND VICE, AND THE
CHOOSING OF THE FORMER.

LET the place of thy meditation be such as the Image represents. And let thy prayer be, in like manner as in the last case, on the subject thus brought before thee.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER in the first place, how God hath ordered all things in measure and number and weight; and how much these things of God hath made all things in weight. Heaven surpass those of earth, in greatness, dignity and value; and let eternal things be chosen by thee in preference to those which are but for a moment. Look therefore, upon the heavens which are above, and from the sight of what thou there beholdest raise thy affections to heavenly things; for God in His loving-kindness hath created them, that thou who hast at all times to look up to Heaven, mayst contemplate its beauty and magnificence and its dominion over those things which are below; and mayst consider the things themselves as they are in thy God. Enquire then whether thou hast raised continually not thy head only, but thy mind also, upward towards heavenly things; and whether thou art preferring things spiritual and eternal to those that are perishable: or art regarding them with that indifference which worldly men are wont to do. In the second place, consider how true is that sentiment of holy David's, As for the children of men they are but vanity, the children of men are deceitful upon the weights: they are altogether lighter than vanity itself. How displeasing to Almighty God is this false estimate of things, Solomon shews where he says, Divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord. Oh, in how false a balance are heavenly things weighed, and how great the preponderance which is given to things earthly! Behold, how little do men of this

world esteem those things which serve as materials for forming virtue,—things toilsome and painful, the serpent, the thirst, the heat and the sand of the desert, the endurance of injuries, (which the holy Father Ignatius asserts is to be very highly esteemed, and of very great moment in the sight of our Creator and God,) and poverty also, and hunger. On the other hand, how highly do they prize honours, pleasures, descent, strength, riches and the like: yea, I may say, but one piece of money, and but one word: for oftentimes on account of one or the other of these, they hazard for ever the loss of their soul. They are taken up like children with contests for mere balls and play-things; while things eternal and true virtue they despise. Hence all courts of justice are overwhelmed with the multitude of litigations and disputants; while rare indeed is the emulation and struggle for the attainment of virtue. Thirdly, if you reflect on how it is that these things are so, you will find that it arises from this circumstance, that men do not turn their thoughts to that end for which they were created, but unto things that are present: for if their aims were directed unto that, they would esteem things seen and present of no real worth excepting so far as they tended towards the attainment of that end: in like manner as the sick man estimates the value of a physician or of medicines, according as they conduce towards his health: as the soldier regards his arms or any artificer his tools, with reference to their use towards the desired end. See whether thou art not thyself carried away by this common error; what is it that troubleth thee? what is it that thou hopest for? and towards what end? is it that thou mayst choose the things that are more excellent, on taking into the account the salvation of thy soul? Then from this general enquiry descend to thine own particular faults, and the virtues which thou desirest.

Vain is the judgment of the world.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that none can come to a true judgment, nor form a comparative estimate of virtue and of the world, except those who are not imposed upon by the false appearance of things, but intimately know their worth. Behold, therefore, the estimate which God Himself hath formed of the good things of this world, inasmuch as He bestoweth them for the most part on bad men; while to His own children and to the good He imparteth virtue; and for this reason hath sent His Son into the world to teach us to despise the world, and to know the value of virtue. Dost thou in very deed believe thy God? if thou wouldst know this, look into His life and thine own. In the second place, consider what is the judgment which Angels make of these vain things, and of virtue, to which

they are so constantly inviting us. In the third place, consider how highly the devils regard virtue, inasmuch as they are assiduously deterring men from it, from their implacable hatred against it; nor is there any thing which they do not bestow on their slaves and dependents in order that they may lead them away from virtue; they fear nothing, they are subdued by nothing but by virtue only; for to use Job's expression, Upon earth there is not her like^a. Fourthly, consider how even among the heathen that which was but the mere image and shadow of Virtue was ever held in honour; how they revered it, although enlightened only by the light of nature; with what honour they regarded their priests and religious ascetics, for such even they had, while under the false semblance of goodness they cloked the greatest impiety. But how dost thou esteem her? how much dost thou labour for her? In the fifth place, that thou mayst love Virtue, consider what she is in herself, that is to say, that good temper of mind, whereby we live rightly, of which no man can make an ill use, which God, not without us, doth work in us. For what else dost thou desire but to live a good and happy life? she overcometh all evils, is herself invulnerable, and maketh such all those that love her, and presents them with the palm-branch and the crown; she surmounteth all difficulties, and with swift step and wings seeketh heavenly things. Now stand and gaze as it were upon her beauty. Assuredly nothing, saith Lactantius, can be found of greater beauty than virtue, of more worth than wisdom. Of her Plato said, that if she could be beheld by the eyes, she would excite the most wonderful love of herself. In the soul only, says Clement of Alexandria, appeareth beauty, and therefore he only who is en-

Virtue shin-
eth like a
light in man.

dued with virtue is really beautiful, or good, or noble; for that only is defined to be truly beautiful and noble which is good. Even in a fair body it is virtue only which appeareth beautiful; which when she flourisheth in the flesh sheweth the loveliness of order and proportion, when the internal character hath shed as it were the light of beauty on the outward form. That thou mayst perceive this the better, consider Adam in a state of innocence, with his mind and soul

Virtue to be
considered in
another.

well ordered: and compare him with what he was after the fall: then consider this or that man whom thou knowest to have been endowed with any virtue which thou art labouring to obtain, and observe diligently how that virtue affects his understanding, will, and memory: she makes his understanding true, his will upright and calm, his memory she fills with holy thoughts; and observe even the effects which it hath on his body and outward acts. Behold again a State or Commonwealth, and see that there only is it well ordered where the best elders rule over the others; and such is a soul that is adorned

^a Job xli. 33.

with virtue, quiet and peaceful, when the passions are subdued, when nothing is feared, and nothing hoped for. In the sixth place, consider that virtue hath her beginning from God, the highest Good; vice from the devil, the greatest evil; so indeed vice is man's greatest evil, and virtue his chiefest and only good. For nothing maketh man good, or holy, or just, but virtue; and nothing is base, valueless, and evil, but vice. What madness is it then, that men should wish for all good things, except for themselves to be good? Good things, saith Augustine, thou wishest to possess, but not for thyself to be good. Since this is so, and since nothing can make thee good except virtue, why dost thou think so much of vanity and the judgment of men, and of those short-lived goods which vice proposeth to thee? which when thou hast thou wilt be neither better nor happier for, yea rather worse and more unhappy.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER first, what Vice is, a monster forsooth which deformeth the soul, rendereth it blind, staineth it, afflicteth it with many diseases, woundeth it most grievously with a threefold weapon, What vice is. that is, in thought, in understanding, and will, as is plain in pride, luxury, anger, and the like. Suppose therefore, some one whom thou knowest to be labouring under that vice which thou desirest to eradicate in thyself: look at him, consider his thoughts, judgments, and discourse: then look into thine own self, at what that sin worketh in thy thoughts, and cordially hate it. Reflect again on the Angels, how most beautiful and most wise they are, and yet what even in their nature the sin of pride hath wrought. In the second place, consider all the good things, if any, which Vice hath, and put them together with the whole world; and then see if they are at all to be put into the balance, or to be compared with Virtue. In the third place, consider how great is the freedom of the virtue, how great is the servitude of the vice; for how utterly a slave is the ambitious man and the covetous, the glutton, the luxurious; and how hard are their laws? For even although it be the soul, or reputation, or life eternal itself, which is at stake; yet "I cannot," saith he, "abstain from the vice by which I am bound." In the fourth place, look down into hell, and there observe above all things how God hateth sin: how He Who is Himself infinite Goodness, hateth that which is infinite evil. In the fifth place, remember how it robbeth the soul of all spiritual good, of the friendship of God, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, of the fruit of good works, and at the end of all, alas, how it blotteth out of the Book of life! Consider again the nature of each Occasion of virtue which presenteth itself to thee; how bare and bald she is behind, as she is wont

to be represented, so that once gone she can never be recovered: how carefully then must she be seized: how carefully every occasion of vice avoided: how great is the sorrow which ensueth when the former hath been neglected: how great the joy that followeth the avoidance of the latter. Consider in the sixth place, how it is often the case that when occasion hath offered itself for some one heroic action, by boldly availing himself of the same, a man hath procured for himself perpetual freedom: on the other hand, in like manner, when an occasion of sin hath crossed his way, how being ensnared thereby he hath given himself over to a perpetual bondage. Firmly resolve with thyself to flee from this, and withstand incipient sins, for medicine comes too late: and he who loveth danger shall perish therein: As far as we can, said Seneca, let us keep aloof from slippery places, for even on dry ground we can hardly maintain a firm footing.

A Short Prayer,

THAT WE MAY NOT ERR WITH THE WORLD IN OUR ESTIMATION OF
VIRTUE.

Thy judgments, O Lord, are true, and are in themselves altogether righteous. I believe and hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee. O that I and all men were wise, that they understood and would consider their latter end! O treacherous balance wherein virtue, and peace, and honour, yea and even Thou also Thyself, Who art all good, Christ Jesus, art weighed; and in the other scale, sin, and its servitude, and its torments; and yet, alas, they preponderate in man's judgment. Folly and injustice are preferred and chosen; while Thou, Who art Wisdom and infinite Goodness, art unwelcome. Take away from me a mind void of understanding, that I may know whither I am going, whom I am following: whither virtue and whither vice doth lead me; that I may come to understand of how great value those things are with Thee, and with Thy Saints and Angels and all reflecting men. And O Thou Who hast loved me more than Thyself, if I may say so, since for me Thou didst even die, make me to live unto Thee; and for Thy sake henceforth, and even for ever, let me die unto myself.

A Longer Prayer.

When Thou, O most sweet Jesus, deignedst to be a stranger here on this earth, there cried unto Thee a blind man, sitting by the way side, "Jesu,

Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" And for nothing else did he seek but that he might behold the light, this brief uncertain light which every night bears away, and which is subject to oft recurring changes. But such is Thy goodness that Thou gavest him to look upon Thyself,—the Sun of righteousness,—the everlasting Light, the desire of the everlasting hills,—the light of true faith, that so he might discern the vanity of all human things, and follow Thee. It is this light which I now humbly entreat of Thee, and with what heartfelt earnestness I seek it, O Eternal Wisdom, Thou knowest; while it is the time of shewing mercy, yea, while the time is now come, the time that I may love Thee, and find Thee out, and learn the gift of Thy understanding. Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living, of those, that is, who are living to the flesh; the depth saith, It is not in me, for the wise of this world find her not; and the sea of this world saith, It is not with me. Thou art hidden, O Wisdom, from the eyes of all living, and the birds of the air, and the wise ones of this world, know Thee not; yet shew Thou unto me, I pray Thee, Thy countenance, and I shall be safe.

Teach me, O Wisdom, to value Thy will and true virtue. For who esteemeth it aright? do I? do I love and seek for her above gold and precious stones? do I thus desire her with my whole heart? all men, I observe, seek their own, and for the things of this world: what do I seek for, a poor and helpless man, and this day about to die? shall I not seek my own, that is, Thee, my God and all Good, my only Good? For what have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. Let me therefore seek Thee while yet Thou mayst be found, even by wretched me; I will call upon Thee while Thou art near, that Thou mayst come to me; for even to-day Thou art ready to give Thyself unto me, and with desire have I desired to partake of Thee. And why? That I may see Thee, and cling unto Thee, and become one with Thee, that in Thy light I may see light, and despise darkness, that is, all the created things of this world. Come then, come, Thou Light of hearts, command the light to shine out of darkness, and inflame in me the fire of Thy love: I hope that there is nothing else which I seek for: but iniquity doth often deceive herself.

O how deceitful on the weights are the children of men! how are they of themselves even lighter than vanity itself! For the sake of vanity of the world, virtue, and the kingdom of Heaven, and even for Thee, alas, scarcely is a foot lifted from the ground. Virtue and Thy commands are weighed in an unjust balance, so that the good things of this world weigh them down, and virtue and Thy law, which converteth souls, and healeth all, is for the most part despised. But behold, vice which inflicteth And allurements of vice. deadly wounds on our souls, so blindeth the understanding, that

Application
to Commu-
nion.

Evils of vice. *she is looked up to : so hardeneth the will, that she is sought for ; so fouleth the memory, that she is eagerly longed for ; and yet more quickly than smoke or the flower of the field doth she perish and pass away ; and yet draggeth man down to eternal death, and draweth him away.*

The praise of virtue. *from Thee, O Thou that art the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

What, on the other hand, are the effects of virtue ? She maketh like to Thee, and bringeth man to Thee, and leadeth on as most dear children to a Father's land, and alone maketh good and blessed. Yet she is despised ; so vain and false are the children of men ; they are themselves deceived, wretched men, and deceive others. There is no one who thinketh in his heart of these things, they are all gone out of the way, there is none that doeth good. O what great blindness oppresseth us wretched men, how great the darkness ; and yet dost not Thou shine upon us, and art not Thou near to us, Who every hour art ready to come to me, that Thou mayst lift up the light of Thy countenance upon me, and mayst dwell in me, and that I may live in Thee, and see the vanity of the world, and avoid its snares and wounds ? But alas ! miserable men that we are, we rush of our own accord amongst enemies and snares of avarice, pride, and luxury ; as though we were ignorant, how the sin of gluttony wounded Adam our father ; how the sword of arrogance thrust Angels down, whom together with Lucifer, out of most holy spirits it made to become most degraded and wicked and cruel.

But such is the madness and the folly of the sons of Adam, O my Saviour, high things are still hoped for and still coveted, and they are willing to be slaves to this or that sin, on whom Thou hast bestowed a holy freedom, and whom Thou hast redeemed with Thine own most precious Blood. I too have gone astray, O Lord, like a sheep that is lost ; O seek, I pray Thee, Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments : lead me into the right path ; grant me to avoid the occasions of sin, and turn them away from me by Thy most gracious hand, that I enter not into temptations. For I see that this world is full of snares : every where are there nets laid, and pitfalls every where. But what is the advice which I would give to another ? What is the advice which the children of this world would give, who are wise in their generation ? O Jesu, O Thou Who art the Way, O Wisdom, O Truth, O Thou the only Salvation, no man shall escape without Thee : whether he live or die, or wake or sleep, no man without Thee ; unless Thou keepest watch on our soul, the watchman waketh but in vain ; unless Thou buildest the house, their labour is but lost who build it : for Thou art our Safety, our Confidence, our Protector, and our only Refuge.

RULES FOR THE PROPER WEIGHING OF VIRTUE AND VICE.

FIRST, seriously to consider the paths of thine own house, and search out what evil habits there may exist therein, what defects in soul, and what in body; of these form a list, and in addition to this have recourse to the judgment of others. Consider thy bad habits.

Secondly, occasionally, at least once a month, look over this description, and observe thine advances or fallings away.

Thirdly, relate to some friend or to thy confessor the number of thy faults. This has been considered by some holy Fathers to be of especial use.

In the fourth place, with regard both to virtues and vices, examine particularly what are the occasions of them, to the end that thou mayst avoid them, if temptations to sin: if leading to virtue, thou mayst embrace them. For a great part of virtue and of safety depends on a watchful foresight of the occasions which tend to impair or support it. Note occasions of good.

Fifthly, often humble thyself with this reflection, that thou seest so many bad men, thieves and robbers, endure such hardships in the perpetration of crime: and indeed all for the attainment of the objects of their own desires.

For the sixth rule, in considering the sins of thy past life and the troubles which thou hast undergone for the world and its laws, determine with thyself to do something similar for the attainment of virtue. Give as much to God, as thou hast to the world.

For the seventh, never either for man's favour or opinion, or for any temporal object, relinquish any devout customs thou art accustomed to; for that were to hold virtue of very little account, and to prefer to her things of the least worth; but those practices which have been approved of and determined on, must be followed up with constancy.

Ejaculations.

"Lord, lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him." Psalm xiii. 3.

"Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart." Psalm cxix. 34.

"I hate them that imagine evil things, but Thy law do I love." Psalm cxix. 113.

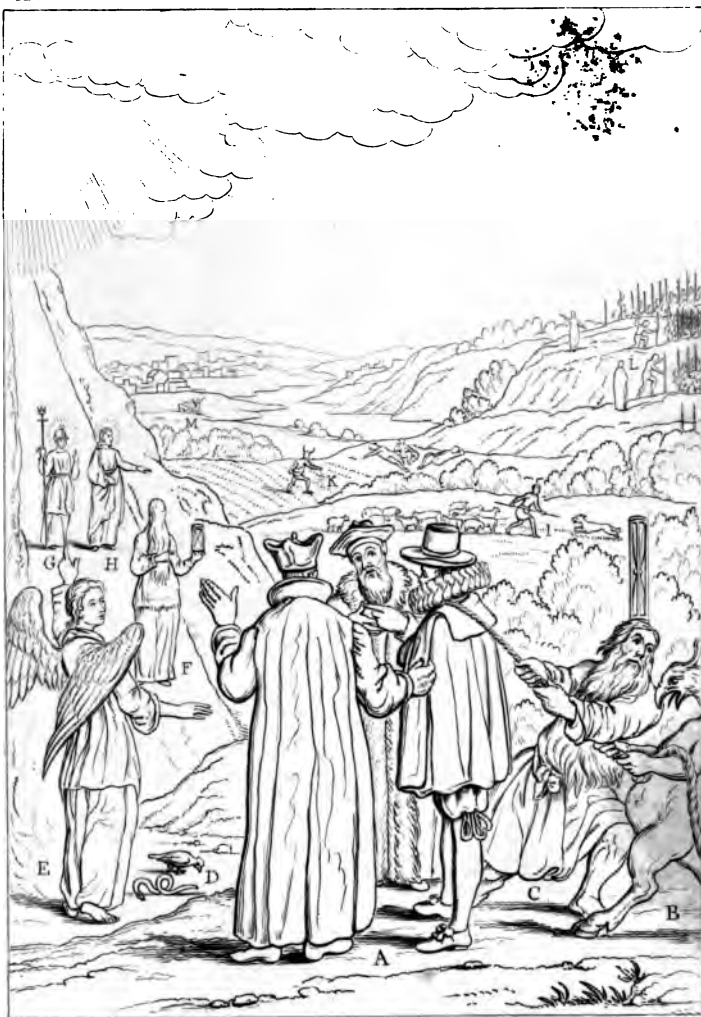
"Lord, what love have I unto Thy law! all the day long is my study in it." Psalm cxix. 97.

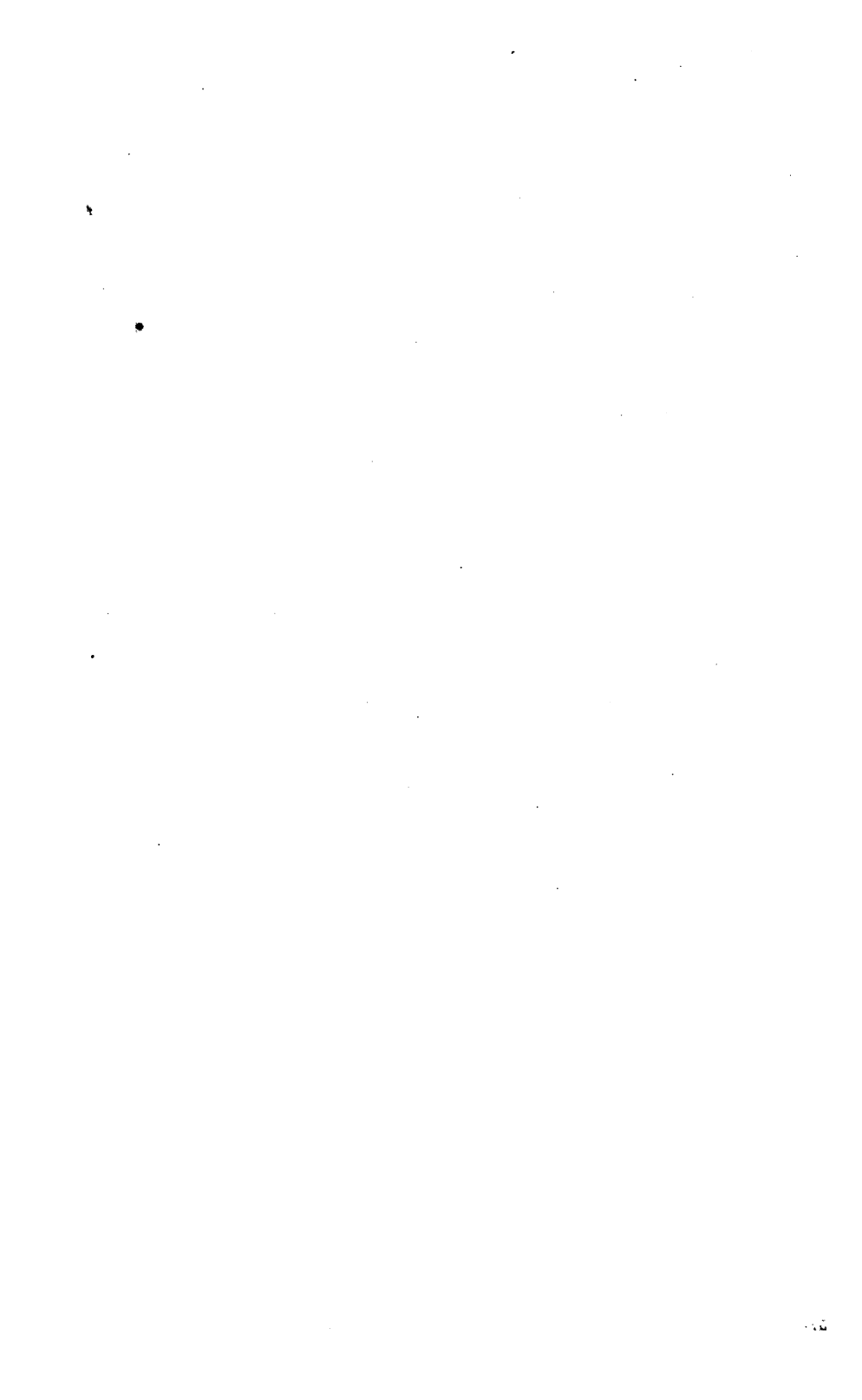
"Oh how sweet are Thy words unto my throat! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth." Psalm cxix. 103.

IMAGE THE EIGHTEENTH.

COME NOW, AND CONSIDER WHAT ADVICE THOU WOULDST GIVE THY FRIEND, IF HE WERE DELIBERATING ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION, AND WITH WHAT PARABLE THOU WOULDST PERSUADE HIM.

Art thou still hesitating, and yet desirous to render thy heart more zealous in the attainment of holiness? Consider as in God's presence what advice thou wouldst seriously give thy friend in such a case (A); and do thou thyself the same. But if Vice holdeth thee back (B), disentangle thyself from her; and especially if she be united with any old evil Habit (C), which formeth a cord around thee, like that of a stern necessity, and which commencing in a thread increases till it becomes as strong as a cable. And then follow thy guardian Angel to all good, and along the straight road of life remember the advice of Christ, by pursuing it with Simplicity (D), and with Prudence (E), which qualities are denoted in Holy Scripture by the Dove and the Serpent. Watch for some Occasion (F) of working out thy salvation. Consider the figures and symbols which surround thee in the world, which may tend to represent Virtue (G) to thy thoughts, either by simile or by contrast. For to do this the Lord Jesus (H) hath taught us by His Parables, such as that of the Good Shepherd (I), that of the Wheat and Tares (K), that of the Vine (L), that of the prodigal Son (M). By which mode of teaching He hath made all nature to be eloquent to us in the things of Salvation.





Considerations

ON THE SECOND MEANS OF ENLARGING OUR MEDITATIONS, AND THE AFFECTIONS THEREFROM ARISING, OR ON IMITATING THE WISDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD IN THE CHOICE OF VIRTUE; AND FOR A MAN TO FOLLOW HIMSELF THAT ADVICE WHICH HE WOULD GIVE HIS DEAREST FRIEND.

PUT thyself in such a place as the Image represents. And pray the Lord that thou mayst thyself make choice of that which thou wouldst persuade another to do.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, first, how wise the children of this world are in managing their affairs, in seeking riches, pleasures or honour; how sedulous night and day in searching out good counsels; how active and unwearied in the accomplishment of those which they perceive will be to their advantage: neither peril of sea nor of robbers affrights them, nor continued toil, nor the unfortunate issue of the plans of others. Compare with this diligence that which the children of light exercise in their salvation; and thou wilt be amazed. Then determine as in a matter of such deep importance, which is no less than thine own salvation, to call in the advice of the most wise and prudent: and suffer not that God should complain of thee, His servant, and say, Who is blind but My servant? or deaf as he to whom I sent My Messengers? And since no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, in deliberating concerning virtue or advance in holiness, it is especially necessary to bring thy reason to the subject free from all bias and affection; and we may know that this is the case when we are able to place before our eyes our own state and business, as if it were another's, and so to form a judgment of it; in like manner as the prophet Nathan did, when he brought home to King David the enormity of his

guilt; or as that woman of Tekoa did, when she persuaded him to receive Absalom back into his former favour.

Examine therefore thy conversation, thy life, or any part of it, or any defect which thou art anxious to amend. Look into it not with thine own eyes, if it may be so expressed, but with the eyes of another; to ascertain whether thou wouldst truly approve of this or that in another person; how in this or that case thou wouldst advise another; whether thou wouldst recommend him to be poor for an hour in order that he might be rich for ever:—or for one hour humble, and for ever exalted:—for one hour, nay for one short moment to mourn and suffer, and for ever to be joyful and to triumph; or the contrary. And do thou thyself take that way which thou wouldst point out to him: that is, the safe way, and the more advantageous towards the attainment of virtue and salvation. Think how deservedly great and how bitter will be the self-reproach in the Judgment, if he who at any time hath shewn the way to others, and by his learning hath held forth a lantern unto them, yet shall himself be convicted of having wandered away from it, of his own accord, into devious paths and darkness. Weigh well that saying, That the servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes; and again,—To him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that nothing deters us so much from pursuing good counsels, that nothing hinders our advance in holiness so much, as some old inveterate habit; how many exhortations and admonitions are necessary before a man will be induced to divest himself of any wrong practice! His bones, says Job, are full of the sin of his youth, which lie down with him in the dust. Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it, is the saying of the Wise man; and so true is it, that Jeremiah, wishing to express the same thing, saith,

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?
An evil habit
a heavy hindrance. then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil. For

habit is as it were a second nature, and becomes like a chain wherewith a man is bound. As Augustine observes: I was bound, he saith, not with iron chains of another, but by mine own iron will. My
Habit like a
chain. will the enemy held in his power, and thence had made a chain for me, and bound me. For out of a perverse will a lust was formed, and while a lust is served, a habit is formed; and while a habit is not resisted, it becomes necessity. Wherefore while thou art

reasoning with thyself, on pursuit of virtue and the avoiding of vice, resist beginnings, press forward on thy work, and think that the most earnest watchfulness is incumbent on thee, lest an evil, if it be allowed but little time, become inveterate, and thou fall by degrees from that one step into worse things. Was it not so with St. Peter? at first he denied Christ: then he added an oath: the third time he utterly repudiated Him. Lazarus, after being dead four days, could not be aroused but by tears and a loud voice, which is the image of a sinner whom a habit of sin hath buried, hath bound, hath wrapped in grave clothes, hath made to stink, and hath shut up with a huge stone, that of custom. Now the consideration of this fact alone, if it be well weighed, is sufficient to supply a spur to our advance in holiness, that is to say, the fear of a depraved habit, which, when it hath quite grown into the man, exposes him to most grievous peril of his eternal salvation, and especially at the time of death. Whence, St. Augustine said, that things which were esteemed but slender threads, as they are lengthened out become like ships' cables: and however slight and slender a thread may be in itself, if it be not entirely broken off, it will grow again, recover strength, and bind more firmly than ever. Nor will it be less profitable to thee to observe, on the other hand, how very much a good habit assists towards the attainment of salvation; and therefore thoroughly overcome all difficulties, and labour to acquire it; and thou shalt attain perseverance in virtue, and enjoy true and great comfort. For until any one hath acquired this steadfastness, he must labour earnestly without ceasing, even as they do of whom it is said, that they are ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth: but when that habit hath been once attained, then the way of the commandments becometh exceeding broad, and sweet even in old age. O how great the consolation when a habit hath once been acquired, neither to feel the labour of virtue, nor any toilsome weariness in a religious life, but as it were securely to enjoy the wealth which has been already acquired!

Resist beginnings.

Great advantage of a good habit.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER that all things which are in the world have been created by the bountiful hand of God, not only for our use, but also for the purposes of discipline and instruction. Therefore there is hardly any thing which is more suited to a spiritual life, as a holy Father used to say, than communion with God, which is the pious habit of drawing from created things matter which may be conducive to spiritual profit;—which may elevate the mind and affections to

Communion with God very profitable.

heavenly things,—may make the memory fruitful with devout thoughts and images, and with these as torches and incentives may inflame the will. Consider how thou hast used these things hitherto: hath it been as a wise child of God? Art thou from the creature gaining the knowledge of the Creator, and the riches of His love? or art thou thence drawing poison, driven onward as the horse and mule which have no understanding? By means of such considerations observe what various similitudes present themselves, by which through the medium of things visible thou mayst ascend to something invisible: as when from the beauty of these things which are seen, we catch the traces and ascend unto the contemplation of the Divine beauty: or when from invisible creatures, as our own souls, we learn to contemplate the invisible God; or lastly, when through visible things we rise up, and see, as in a glass, other visible things, in like manner as the Divine Wisdom hath shewn us by parables and similitudes. Happy are they, saith Ricardus, who turn those things into a ladder, which others turn to their ruin: happy they, to whom the knowledge of external things becomes the school of ascending upward, and not the means of going downward to their ruin; happy they whom that knowledge, which puffeth up, inflateth not, but inflameth with the love of that knowledge that buildeth up! Happy they whom the beauty of things temporal, stirreth up to seek the things of eternity! Dost thou wish to arouse thyself unto virtue, and to derive an ample harvest of meditations and reflections? Behold the visible universe, admire its beauty and variety, and consider the creature with regard to the Creator. In the first place, they are as it were a mirror of things divine, as Trismegistus was wont to say, and a book full of divinity. They speak in our ears, and praise His power and wisdom and goodness. In the second place, note how they are all obedient to Him. Thirdly, consider how they all serve thee, and instruct thee, if thou wilt rightly attend to them; whence the Wise man saith, Go to the ant, thou sluggard: and Wisdom itself, Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. In the fourth place, consider how they all endeavour and labour after self-preservation, and, for the most part, to increase and be perfected according to their conditions, that we also may be taught thereby to proceed onwards in the way of God, to advance day by day, and to preserve these things to which we have already attained.

The sight of
the world ex-
citeth to vir-
tue.

A Short Prayer.

I believe Thee, my Lord, Eternal Wisdom, and in Thee I hope, and Thee I love with my whole heart. O Jesu, of old Thou hast said, Who is blind but My servant? or deaf as he to whom I sent My messenger? but O, infinite Goodness, shall the children of this world be in this generation wiser than Thy children? shall it be that they should choose the more excellent things, and we the worse? that they should choose honour as long enduring as they can, and great riches, and joy before sorrow, and peace in preference to war; but I, in this matter (here name it) should choose enmity against Thee, and poverty, and grief, and everlasting contempt? Far be it from me, and far from Thee, Who in Thy blood and Thy tears hast written Thy law, and implanted wisdom in our hearts, and by Thy humility and Thy sufferings dost cry aloud to us, that the goods of this world,—whereby we are drawn away and enticed, and lose the things eternal and Thee the only Good,—are but vain. O would I could learn the value of virtue from Thee, and from Thy whole life, from Angels, from mine enemies, yea even from the heathen: Grant me, I pray Thee, to follow this occasion (name it) and all occasions of practising this for Thy sake. So may I consult for mine own good, as I would persuade another to do; let me exhort and be urgent upon myself as I would upon another person; so that I may be wise and understand and consider my latter end, and love Thee. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

Ah me, how thick is this darkness in which we are involved! O Light eternal, Lovely Truth, Christ Jesus, Wisdom of the Father, Messenger of good Counsel, come, I beseech Thee, and give light unto those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. My feet are my love: by it I am carried whithersoever I go. But what do I love? In this and in this (here name) alas, it is my own heart that I love, and the diseases of my soul and death. Others I would myself warn to beware of these things, I own I would, yet shall I, a blind and unhappy man, myself embrace them? and flee from Thee, O God, my only Good, Who invitest me to the most sweet embraces of a Father, that is, to all perfection? I see the failings of others and their faults, but my own I am ignorant of, or neglect them; in the case of others we have the sharp-sighted eyes of a lynx, in our own, alas, we are blind. O how much wiser are the children of this world in their generation than the ^{Wisdom of} this world.

children of light are in theirs ! Lo, we warn our friends (think of some case) that this or that is best ; that the way to eternity cannot be trodden over again ; that the day of death is uncertain, yea, the very hour and moment ; that we must so live, as though we were to die this very hour. These things on others even I myself would oftentimes inculcate. For in the failings of others we are highly scrupulous and fastidious, ever ready to convict them, but ourselves we flatter, seeking excuses in our sins. Mightest Thou not deservedly say to us, " Physician, heal thyself ;"—when we give healthful counsels to others, and follow the worse ourselves ?

O how hard will be the judgment on that servant who knoweth his Lord's will, and doeth it not ! assuredly he shall be beaten with many stripes. For

Death lieth
hid in the
creature.

how is it ? do I know there is death in the pot, or in this or that creature, and yet do I not call out ? I know there is life in Thy Cross and in Thy Cup, and yet am I ashamed to glory in them ? I see Thee going before me in humility and poverty, and shall I not deign to follow Thee ? What shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men ? Enter not, O Lord, into judgment with Thy servant in this matter ; but deal Thou with me according unto Thy word for good ; that what I myself would persuade others concerning their state of life, the choice of virtue, and contempt of vanity and rooting out of failings, I myself may follow the same ; lest I be compelled to hear that saying, Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? thou that preachest this or that (here name) to another, dost thou neglect thyself ? and thou who art to thyself an evil servant, to whom canst thou be good and faithful ?

He who despiseth Thee Who art all good, what can he love ; except it be

Application
to Commu-
nion.

all evil and a whole world of iniquity ? and can this be the case, that I should receive that world into my soul, and shut Thee out, Thee Whose coming I await beyond all things, Who art the soul's most loving Spouse ? Can it be that there should be no place therein found for Thee, save among the thorns and briars of vanity and wickedness ? But who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? Canst not Thou Who alone hast life in Thyself ? Grant therefore, O Eternal Wisdom, that I may so direct my own ways, as I would point out to another : so desist from evil, as I would persuade another to do : so choose the better part, as I would exhort my dearest friend ; as is befitting one, who is even this day to entertain the King of kings, Whom I love, and seek with my whole heart. And what is it, let me ask, which hinders me, when I see and approve of the better part and pursue it not ? Alas, my Lord, Thou Who savest me from my cruel enemies, it is only the weight of some heavy habit, and destructive chain, such as may be formed more easily than broken, save by Thee, Lord of all power. I will arise, I will arise, and by Thy grace I will follow Thee, O Lord : I will make no delays, lest the habit gain strength, and the

night come, and I be no longer able to see Thee, O my Light, but Thou shouldst flee from me for ever, and forsake me.

Far be it, O Goodness, O Love, far be this from Thee, and far be it from me for ever. I will not delay to come to Thee, and to seek this ^{Devout purpose.} virtue [here think of some virtue] so necessary for me, in order that I may please Thee. For I love Thee with my whole heart. O Thou the Light of mine eyes, my only Refuge, loose Thou these knots that are wreathed together by my wickedness: loose Thou the chains which keep me back from that liberty which by Thy Blood Thou hast gained for me. Grant Thou unto me the wings of a dove, that I may fly unto Thee, and find rest. Raise Thou me up aloft above the high places of this earth, that in vain the net may be spread before mine eyes; that I may see the works of Thy hands, and learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding, where is length of days and life, where is the light of the eyes and peace^a. But where is rest, save in Thee? Where the light of the eyes, save in Thee the true Light? Where length of days, but in Thee, Who art my Life, Whom beyond all life I love? There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer: the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks: the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands: the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces^b. For these purposes Thou dost send me to the ant, that I may seek Thee while Thou mayst be found, and the good which faileth not; and Thou dost command me to be wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove. Blessed be Thou for ever: lo, our harvest is already come, and Thou biddest me labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, that is Thyself, Who endurest for ever and ever.

And where, O my soul, shall be thy chamber? Will it not be in the holes of the rock? And Thou art my Rock, Christ Jesus, and Thou alone art my refuge. O that I might so drink this day of that Spiritual Rock, that I might no more thirst for ever for the solace of the creature. O that I who have been sent as a sluggard to the ant, and to the dove to learn simplicity, and to the serpent to learn wisdom, may have Thee every where present with me, and speaking in all created things; because Thou through them art speaking unto me,—speaking, alas, too often to one who is both deaf and dumb; and yet even to the deaf Thou continuest still to speak. O let Thy voice, I pray Thee, sound in my ears, so that I may hear Thee, and hear every creature exhorting me to love Thee. Let every thing that hath breath praise Thee, O Lord, and let all Thy works continually say, He hath made us and preserveth us that we may serve thee, in order that thou, a worm,

^a Baruch iii. 14.

^b Proverbs xxx. 25—28.

mayst serve our God. Every creature crieth aloud to me, Who is great as our God? the very sight and beauty of them thus speaks. And why do they thus cry aloud? but that I may come to Thee, that I may hear Thee, and may serve Thee. And shall not I whom Thou hast bought at so great a price, shall I not glorify Thee, and serve Thee, O Lord, in my body and in my soul, that by true virtue I may please Thee alone,—Thee, Who alone art my God, the God of my heart, my All. Thou art my Maker, and my God, and my Father, and my Lord. Thy Flesh is my meat indeed, and Thy Blood is my drink indeed, that I may live, and may live in Thee, which with all my strength I do desire.

RULES CONCERNING THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD.

Communication with God. FIRST observe, as Thou art walking through the streets and the fields, the industry of men, which each exercises in his own matters, and from thence gather some spiritual fruit.

Secondly, from all creatures accustom thyself to do the same; and determine with thyself to gain wisdom at one time from this creature, at another time from that, as the voice of wisdom teaches.

Method of pious discourse. Thirdly, in this manner seize the handle of pious discourse; and on thy way as thou goest, to pass thy time pleasantly, seek out what spiritual consideration may be elicited from this or that circumstance; and thou wilt find many things presenting themselves to thee, and that too with great delight, as subjects of conversation.

In the fourth place, you may examine closely the natures of those things by which, in Holy Scripture, Christ is shadowed forth, as for instance, a ship, or tree, or the sun, or light.

Use of an evil habit. Fifthly, search out diligently what even natural evil habits thou hast, and study to overcome them, by the contrary ones. I conceive no wisdom to be greater than this; since as I have often said, the very best habit is contracted by use and time as easily as the worst.

For the sixth rule. In like manner as covetous men endeavour to make gain out of every thing, so do thou, O ascetic liver, use thyself; and whether good or evil things occur, see that thy mind be not cast down in any thing from its proper state: and conform thine own to the Divine will.

For the seventh. As the children of this world ambitiously adhere to men of honour, so do thou, scholar of virtue, observe those who are most attached to virtue, and studious of holiness; and as far as thou art able keep up an intercourse with them.

Note thy passions, and use them for spiritual progress. Eighthly, consider what passions are most strong in thee, by God's grace, and use these for advance in holiness: for instance, art thou proud? make use of this pride, and raise thy mind to things truly high and lofty, look down upon the things of earth, despise man's judgments compared with those of God. Suffer not thyself to be de-

servedly chargeable with that folly, by which the lovers of the world prefer things of a moment to those that are eternal;—vain things to those that are true;—the creature to the Creator and the chiefest Good.

Exhortations.

“The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” St. Luke xvi. 8.

“To be carnally minded is death.” Rom. viii. 6.

“Who is blind but My servant?” Isaiah xlii. 19.

“Turn away mine eyes lest they behold vanity, and quicken Thou me in Thy way.” Psalm cxix. 37.

“Thou also shalt light my candle, the Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light.” Psalm xviii. 28.

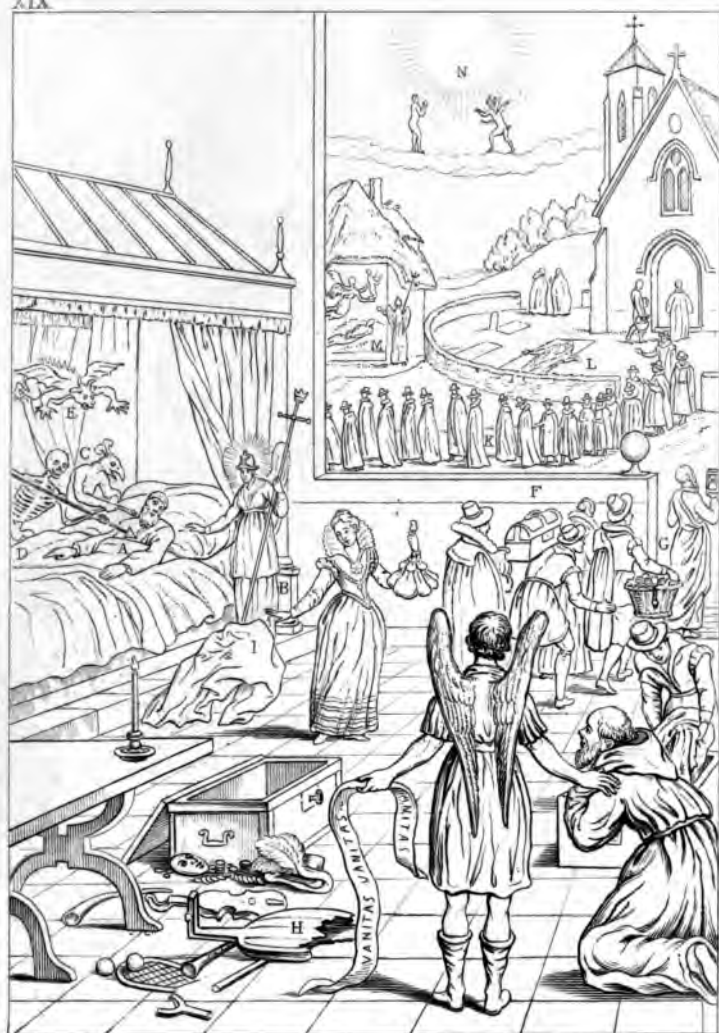
“Lead me forth in Thy truth and learn me, for Thou art the God of my salvation: in Thee hath been my hope all the day long.” Psalm xxv. 4.

“Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts.” Psalm cxxxix. 23.

IMAGE THE NINETEENTH.

CONSIDER HOW IN DEATH THOU WILT WISH TO HAVE CULTIVATED ANY PARTICULAR VIRTUE; AND MAKE USE OF LIFE AND OPPORTUNITY.

Reflect now, if thou wilt not wish in death (A) to have followed virtue rather than vice. For at that time Virtue (B) alone will stand by thee, and be a consolation to thee; when Sin (C) and its worm shall torment thee, when Death (D) shall terrify thee, and the Demon (E) will be ready at hand to hurry away the impenitent soul. When even thine intimate friends (F), and they that are flesh and blood, shall carry away thy riches: when Occasion (G) shall have departed; when all worldly pleasures and sports (H) shall have perished. When out of all thy earthly possessions nothing will remain to thee, but the winding-sheet (I). When thy friends and kindred (K) will follow indeed thy funeral procession to the grave, but, alas, must desert thee there, and leave thee to earth and forgetfulness: and however eagerly thou mayst desire (L) their society, yet thou canst obtain it not. On the other hand, the Righteous man (M), being refreshed by Virtue, and by good Angels, shall have death converted into life, and sorrow changed into joy. O with what tranquillity of mind will the righteous man, with what perturbation of mind will the sinner approach unto the Judgment-seat of God (N)!





On Death

OR THE THIRD MEANS OF INCREASING MEDITATION AND ITS FRUITS,
AND THE CONSIDERATION OF THAT WHICH WE SHALL WISH TO
HAVE CHOSEN WHEN WE COME TO DIE.

SUPPOSE thyself in a place such as the Image represents: and use the prayer found below as suited to the same.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER for what purpose thou art placed by God in this life:— is it not that by the short space of one hour thou mightest purchase for thyself an eternal weight of glory? There is therefore no other business for thee, nor for any other man to attend to, but this alone: and yet observe that men for the most part are engaged in all other things but this.

In the second place, observe diligently how, when that hour shall have come, that man must needs be affected, who on this stage of life hath rightly acted his part: and in this merchandize hath procured for himself the true riches: how may he exult at the messenger of death, and long eagerly for it; yea even as a famished man invited to a plentiful feast, as a labourer called to receive his wages, or a poor man summoned to a throne. On the other hand, consider that then the wicked and slothful servants, together with the foolish virgins, when all too late, are beginning to think of the oil and their lamps, and are soon hurried away to their Judge, stripped of all things, with nothing to pay, and in most grievous confusion. What wise man considering these things, doth not forthwith willingly embrace virtue, although its root be bitter, abhorring this gall and wormwood which shall be in the cup of vice?

And now pause and consider, which of these wilt thou imitate? consider, art thou prepared to go to thy Judge, and give in thy account? and yet thou oughtest so to live and so to study virtue, as at all times ready to do so.

SECOND POINT.

IMAGINE thyself to behold such a man at the point of death, or some one whom thou hast known rather rich than good : and think how bitter is the bare remembrance of death to that man that liveth at rest in his possessions : what can he think, or say, or feel respecting the world, its glory and the like, when he turneth back his eyes to places and times, to former delights, and friends, objects whom he used to enjoy, and to which once and for ever he must now bid adieu ? All those things he will behold converted into mourning, and songs into lamentation, and those days in one short moment to be exchanged for everlasting night. O how vain will then appear the excitements of this world, how bitter its delights ? where will they then be ? and where his friends ? His friends, as the saying is, will turn to worship the rising sun, and his heir will long for his property and to seize the spoils he has left. Trials on all sides shall gather around thee and overwhelm thee. Consider now what the rich man, and the vain-glorious, and the delicate, can take with him of all his delights : and what thou canst thyself. But on the other hand, how different will be the case with pious men, and those who love God : they will leave behind the former things without a tear, they will rejoice that their labours are come to an end, which are now fruitful in rewards and consolations, that their term of exile is accomplished, that rest is prepared for them, and the crown, that awaiteth them that strive lawfully.

THIRD POINT.

IMAGINE then the dying man turning his thoughts to the things to come ; there he will see ages passing away onward unto the Judgment, and in that space of time the manifold changes of the world and its kingdoms, but no memorial of himself. Look here, O thou that art the sport of vanity and vain-glory, look thou, O ambitious man, on this ! In the second place, he will behold a horrible eternity ; into which he must pass by one step, alas ! and that how uncertain, how fearful ! and yet perhaps by thee and by me to be passed on this day, and perchance at this hour. And now consider the Judgment as ready for the rich sinner,—yea, as even for thee and for me : the many accusers, and inquisitors, and the most uncertain end, when man knoweth not, whether he be worthy of love or of hate. Thirdly, weigh well this, that on this moment, and on this short step, all eternity dependeth. And that therefore from thenceforward every chance of salvation

must be seized. Good God, good God, do I indeed believe this and yet shudder not? Ah, with what reason did Moses exclaim, "O that men were wise, that they would understand this, that they would consider their latter end!" And now in the fourth place, attend to what happens to man after death, look forward to thy funeral, think what it will be, and where and what will be thy sepulchre. It may be there will be a long pompous funeral, yet that will be but short: thy friends will accompany it, yet all in vain for thee, who wilt be a senseless corpse which perceiveth them not: nor can they help thee: they may mourn and perhaps with many an increasing tear, yet most assuredly such as will be fruitless and all in vain. And now descend into thy grave, lie down as it were alive among the dead, and look upon the crawling worms, and creeping things hastening to their prey, and thyself turned into a foul corpse, wasted into a state of corruption which all loathe and flee from. And a body such as this, canst thou still cherish to the detriment of thy soul? Lastly, look whither can the sinner turn himself for consolation, when the hour of death is declared, and when the Lord hath come to take account with His servants? Whither shall the wretched man turn?—above he shall behold an angry God, beneath the yawning gulf, around him raging enemies:—within a gnawing conscience. And on this hour, even on this moment he sees unending eternity depend. O eternity, eternity, eternity, depending on one moment, tremendous eternity! Apprehendest thou this? believest thou this? do thy works, and do mine, speak this? Our care and earnestness will shew.

A Short Prayer.

O my only Life, Christ Jesus, I believe in Thee, and hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee. Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time^a. And may it not be my lot, even this day, to tread the way of all flesh? But the number of our months is with Thee, O Jesus, yea the number of our moments. But then, when all things shall have gone by like a shadow, what shall I wish to have loved? what to have thought, or said, or done? what persons to have called blessed? the poor, the humble, the meek, the mourners, the patient, the hungering after righteousness, or the contrary to them? Truly they shall then appear blessed to me, whom Thou hast called blessed. Therefore henceforward from love to Thee I will die to myself, that so I may live to Thee. I will forsake all things, to find Thee; I will suffer and

^a Ecclesiastes ix. 12.

mourn here, to rejoice in Thee; I will hate myself and my own life that, as I desire, I may love Thee for ever with my whole heart. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

My God, Who art every where present, Thou hast admonished me, that "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart^b." But how great is the bewitching of naughtiness, which obscureth things that are honest; and how great is the wandering of concupiscence, which doth undermine the simple mind^c? But, O Jesus, my Light, through Thy grace I see, when death shall have come, and when Thou, my Life, shalt draw near, that then at length the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and they shall see how "the world passeth away and the lust thereof^d." O how different will our sense of things then be, how different our judgment of all things! Who is there, however bad he may be, who will not then wish that he had followed virtue and honesty in this life; that in this, or that matter, he had conquered himself, and had heard Thy voice, O good Shepherd? but, alas, vain will be the wish.—Then man will see, that the world hath passed away, and all its desires, and the riches which he used to love, and the honour, and the glory, and the favour, and all things—that they have all passed away as a shadow. And can it be that for things such as these, for shadows and smoke, that Thou, O my God, Who art the true Light, and Goodness infinite, and our Life, shouldst now be a laughing-stock to the wicked, and their contempt? Ah me, how I mourn that Thou hast been so trifled with,—that I myself have so trifled with Thee.

O death, how bitter is the thought of thee to the lukewarm, and slothful, to him that liveth at rest in his possessions. What then shall he do, when he shall see the tomb prepared for himself instead of a palace? when he shall hear that his last hour has come? when he receives sure messengers from Thee? Oh how will his heart beat, and his eyes languish, and his face grow pale, and his friends fly from him, and his riches fail their lord, and a winding-sheet alone be left:—he will see his pleasures have departed, and, alas, wretched man, he will despair for ever of their return; because he neglected virtue, humility, charity, liberality, and patience, and chiefly Thy voice and example, O good Jesus, his King and Shepherd. What solace will there then be for a dying man, and for me, save the remembrance of virtue, and of a well-spent life? And Thou, O good Jesus, the certain

^b Eccles. vii. 2.

^c Wisdom iv. 12.

^d 1 John ii. 17.

hope and defence of Thine elect, vouchsafest of Thine infinite goodness to be, as Thou deignest to be called, the meat and provision by the way to me a traveller, Thou Who art Thyself the Way, and the Bread that sustaineth, and the Life. Thou art food to me, although by Thine own children Thou art full often thrown away to the dogs. But do I from my heart and inmost soul ever desire to receive Thee, that when my strength faileth, Thou my Hope, my true and only Hope, mayst not forsake me, but mayst receive me into everlasting habitations, even into Thine arms, that when death shall be present to me, Thou my Life mayst meet me:—that when friends fly from me, I may find Thee, my Friend, my Solace, my Refuge, in that hour? O if indeed I felt these things, my God, never would I neglect virtue; nor should vices, that have been once by Thy mercy cut down, again spring up in my soul. Josias, beloved of Thee, brake in pieces the images, cut down the groves, nor would he suffer them again to be raised up, but filled the places with dead men's bones; and assuredly never again should I raise up in the temple of my heart those idols,—which I worship so often as I turn from virtue,—if in that heart there ever kept watch an unfailing remembrance of my death. For, as thy servant Bernard used to say, horror at our departure, pain in passing from the world, shame at the sight of the glory of the great God, these all are warnings to us. Whence, then, saith he, is this dissimulation and hiding of our sins in us, whence this so hurtful lukewarmness, whence this accursed fearlessness? Why do we, wretched beings, beguile ourselves? Perhaps we are made rich, perhaps we are as kings; do not then these horrible spirits besiege our doors? do not these ghastly forms wait on our going out? But if we truly have cherished virtue, as then we shall wish to have done, we shall by Thy grace be secure, Thy right hand shall visit us:—the most sweet presence of Thine Angels shall refresh us, when deserted of all things below;—and Thy presence, O good Jesus, as I trust, shall save us: Thou shalt shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from Thy love. Yea, what I shall then wish to have done, I will now do: and through Thy grace, that common error and madness shall not beguile me, that I should choose those things which then I shall be sorry that I have chosen,—and that for ever. And since it is appointed unto all men once to die, I will begin now to die to myself, that so I may live to Thee, O my Life, O my Light! O Thou Light that never goest down, when wilt Thou arise? when shall these shadows flee away? Truly our days are very short, and the number of our months is with Thee^c:

Application
to Commu-
nion.

^c Job xiv. 5.

yet are they long to him who desires and sighs for Thee. When wilt thou come, O death, which shall restore me to Life? Thou wilt come, O Jesus, I know, like a thief in the night; come, Oh come; but to him who fears Thee, Lord, and loves Thee, grant some sign of Thy coming, that I may watch for Thee, whether it be in the first, or the second, or the third watch Thou comest. Help me, while it is light, while space yet remaineth for repentance, while there is time to obtain glory; help me to honour Thee for ever, and to find favour in Thy sight. Thou art my witness that I seek this only. Therefore will I use the talents and the opportunities which Thy goodness gives me, lest, like the wicked servant, I should be condemned to be cast into outer darkness, when, alas, after the long delays of life, I hoped with the good and faithful servant to enter into the home and joy of my Lord! O when shall this be? when shall I come to appear before the presence of God? When wilt Thou come and deliver me from the body of this death? so that living, yea truly living, I may give thanks unto Thee, and praise Thee, and exalt Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

RULES FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH.

FIRST of all, daily whilst thou art in the church, consider that thou art placed as it were in the midst of the dead, for all parts of a church abound with tombs; bear in mind that thou too must die in a brief space; and examine well whether thou art prepared for death.

Secondly, It is better, saith the Wise man, to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: therefore if thou art mourning the loss of any friend, compose thyself to the thoughts of death: or if thou meetest one in the apparel of mourning, deem it not a mere accident, but regard him as a messenger of warning sent to thyself. So Damascenus relates of a certain pious king, who in that mind used to receive and entertain sacred persons.

In the third place, St. John Eleemosynarius (or the Almoner) by a sort of divine prudence, would have his servant daily to remind him of his tomb: namely, to tell him that it was being prepared, and by degrees, that it was completed and ready: the object of this most holy man was, that by these means, he might have his desires after a better life sharpened by the remembrance of death. Yea of Philip king of Macedon it is related, that in the height of his prosperity he placed a monitor by him daily, to tell him each morning he was man: that so he might repress his more proud thoughts, and daily perceive the inconstancy of fortune and all the other miseries of man's life, and so might prepare himself for them. O how will this cause the Christian to blush in the Judgment-day! Thou canst imitate the

holy John and this king, if each day, before thou liest down, thou wouldst write some thought on death, or the vanity of the world, and so fasten it to thy bed, that it would meet thine eyes on thy first waking in the morning, and strike thy mind. Or if on a tablet thou wert to inscribe the months and years of thy life, beginning from thy natal day, and then the duties of each day, and how it should be passed, and between these write, "Death."

Fourthly, every evening when thou liest down, ask thyself if thou art prepared to die: for bed doth well remind us of the tomb, just as sleep is said to be the image of death,—and so lie down, as though this night thou wert to be hurried off to judgment; and at least excite contrition for thy sin, and accompany it by some act of faith, and hope, and charity, and thanksgiving. At the same time renew all thy vows of a holier life, and so in peace thou mayst lay thee down to sleep and take thy rest.

Note how
thou liest
down to
sleep.

Ejaculations.

"If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."
Rom. vi. 8.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days—the number of his months are with Thee. Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." Job xiv. 1, 5.

"O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions." Eccclus. xli. 1.

"We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground; which cannot be gathered up again." 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death; and shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell?" Psalm lxxxix. 47.

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Luke xii. 40.

"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them." Wisdom iii. 1.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1.

IMAGE THE TWENTIETH.

WHICH WILT THOU WISH TO HAVE CHOSEN ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT,
VIRTUE OR VICE?

O the terrible sight of Judgment ! Behold, O man, and consider what then thou wilt wish to have done : do that now, and love Virtue (A), which will then alone be thine advocate, when God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of thy heart (B). The good things thou hast done thy good Angel shall then recount (C), but the devil also before God and the whole world shall accuse thee of thy sins (D). Oh, how will the wicked man then wish to be united with the good (E). O the sad separation (F) ! O the mournful spectacle ! Here the world, which mortals make so much account of, is burned up (G). There kings and princes are trembling (H). Here will be past the irrevocable sentence either of eternal punishment (I) or of eternal glory (K). If thou wilt ever keep in mind these the last things, surely thou wilt never willingly be guilty of any sin.





On the Last Judgment,

OR THE FOURTH METHOD OF INCREASING MEDITATION AND THE AFFECTIONS ARISING THEREFROM.

CONSIDER thyself in such a scene as the Image represents, and use the prayer on that subject.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER first, that there is a certain day appointed of God, of which no man knoweth, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained^a. And ^{Why the judgment is to take place.} here observe why it is that God hath determined this judgment. In order that in the first place the sentence of judgment may be given and pronounced on each particular case. Secondly, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad^b; and that the body itself, as the instrument, may in a similar way be judged. And thirdly, that the judgments of God may be seen to be just and holy, although He now may suffer the wicked to be prosperous and praised, and the good oppressed and despised; of which David said that he tried to understand it but it was too hard for him, until he considered their latter end^c. Lastly, that to Jesus our King, and most sweet Redeemer, there may be given honour in the face of the whole world in return for the ignominy which He endured; in that very place, that is to say, on mount Olivet, near Jerusalem, where with so many torments He suffered a most shameful death. Rejoice, O my soul, rejoice in thy Christ Jesus, because the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son^d. Assuredly it becometh thee to congratulate thy Lord because of that Day, to give thanks to God the Father and be glad (for that He shall judge the

^a Acts xvii. 31.

^c Psalm lxxiii. 15.

^b 2 Cor. v. 10.

^d John v. 22, 23.

people righteously, and help all the meek upon the earth. Consider in the second place the signs which will precede His coming; how, as Isaiah saith, "it shall be at an instant, suddenly.

**Terribleness
of the judg-
ment.**

Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire^e." "A fire devoureth," saith Joel, "before them, and behind them a flame burneth." "The sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining^f."—Yea, the stars shall fall from Heaven^g, and the sun become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon become as blood^h. Oh how well doth Zephaniah exclaim, "The voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarmⁱ." Look upon the

**Meditate on
what the
world will be.**

world burning like Sodom; fire laying waste the land, the sea, cities, towns, and the pride of ages: the elements melting with fervent heat, the earth and the works that are therein being burned up^k. Cast thine eyes around; Behold, all things are involved in devouring flame, and squallidness and desolation. And can the world and its beauty still please thee? Shall virtue still continue to be some harsh thing in thine eyes? Shall it still be a weariness to thee to labour one hour for Christ?

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER the thunder of the Angelic Trumpet, "Arise ye dead:"—see, oh see, how the condemned soul, with the greatest horror, is constrained to be clothed upon with the body: while the holy soul doth the same with joy: imagine to thyself the converse of each, and the feelings of the good and evil conscience: and here stop and pause awhile. Then see how from cities, and walls, and caves, issuing forth in immense numbers, they are all hastening towards the valley of Jehosaphat:—and as thou dost contemplate all these, discern, if thou canst, the monarch from the slave, or the rich from the poor, or the wise man from the child. Where then shall be the favour of men, the riches, glory, wisdom, of this world? Detest now whatever there be of this kind which keepeth thee back from perfection, and from this virtue [*here consider some virtue*];—and tremble for thyself. See

**Character of
the judg-
ment.**

^e Isaiah xxix. 5, 6.

^g Matt. xxiv. 29.

ⁱ Zeph. i. 14—16.

^f Joel ii. 10.

^h Rev. vi. 12.

^k 2 Pet. iii. 10.

how the sheep are separated from the goats, the good from the wicked, the wheat from the tares; and how these last are wailing, and calling unto the mountains "Fall on us." O how sad, how mournful, how lamentable the separations! And where shalt thou be; with whom shalt thou be joined? Assuredly with those whom thou now dost choose. Oh, what is there which unhappy man will not wish to have done, that so on that day he may be united to the good! But vain will then be tears, and prayers, and crying. Then shall be said to the humble man, "Friend, go up higher:" to the rich, and the powerful, and the proud, "Give this man place!" Oh with what shame will he then go down to take the lowest place. Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of monarchs, kings, and princes, and such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours; and they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This is he whom we had some time in derision, and a proverb of reproach: we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour: how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints^m! In the midst of these things shall the Lord Himself come with power and great glory. He shall come with ten thousands of His saintsⁿ; and they shall rejoice with the good, but be turned away from the evil. What wilt thou then wish; and with what eye to be beheld? Soon shall appear the sign of the Son of Man, more resplendent than the sun, and the children of God shall lift up their heads, and they who by mortification have been followers of His Cross will rejoice; they who now have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, will exult with incredible joy, when they see themselves written, O most sweet Jesus, on Thy hands^o, and in Thy most sacred wounds; then all Thy adversaries shall be confounded, and pine away. What shall I then choose and wish to have done?

Then shall be opened the books of all consciences, and the counsels of the heart shall be made manifest^p. Then the estimations and opinions, the most secret hypocrisy, the infidelity, the oblique designs and hidden motives of each single person will be made to appear. And, O good God, with what shame and confusion will it be to the wicked? Consider whether thou wouldst have all the secrets of thine heart laid open to the eyes of all men. See, what thou now writest in that book:—is it virtue, or is it vice? For there is nothing hid that shall not be known^q. Soon will follow terrible accusa-

^l Luke xiv. 9, 10.

ⁿ Jude 14.

^p 1 Cor. iv. 5.

^m Wisdom v. 1—5.

^o Isaiah xlix. 16.

^q Matt. x. 26.

Conscience
shall lie open
to all.

Terrible ac- tions, but that which will be most bitter of all things, imagine
 cusers. thyself listening, while Christ upbraideth all, and thee amongst
 them, with the benefits He hath conferred: the Saints with the benefits,
 admonition, and examples, they have given: the devils their evil sug-
 gestions and crimes: and all the creatures thy abuses of them. The
 Lord "will search Jerusalem with candles^r." Great indeed is the day
 of the Lord, and very terrible. Who may abide it? Burning is His
 anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: His lips are full of indignation,
 and His tongue as a devouring fire, and His breath as an overflowing
 stream^s to destroy the nations. The sinner shall stand, and see con-
 science accusing him within, and the devils around him, all ready for
 their prey: whither shall he fly? Beneath him hell is yawn-
 ing; above him is a Heaven that is shut, and an angry Judge;
 Unhappy state of the sinner. —whither shall he go?

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER, how at length, when the wicked have been convicted, so
 as themselves to allow the truth of their conviction, and the good are
 approved, that then will be passed the irrevocable sentence, for eternity!
 eternity most long, interminable, incomprehensible: eternity, of the
 highest joy and everlasting pains! Then, first of all, shall speak the
 Sentence of the good. most kind Jesus, "Come" (that is from your cross and tribula-
 tions) "ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared
 for you from the foundation of the world." O how, thinkest thou, will
 they themselves and all the Angels with them, be amazed at the free
 goodness, and the boundless love of God! On the other hand, the
 wicked will then hear, "Depart from Me," (that is, from all good, from
 your Father and your God,) "ye cursed, into everlasting fire:" because
 ye were unwilling to keep My commandments but for one hour, for one
 moment. Weigh each word, and if thou canst, continue to treasure up
 wrath for thyself against the day of wrath^t. Soon will follow the
 execution, and these shall go away into life eternal: but those into ever-
 lasting fire. Come now, join thyself to the good who are full of gratula-
 tions, and learn what happiness they enjoy by reason of virtue, and
 eternal security. And now draw near to the wicked, and learn in
 them the bitterness indescribable of vice, in that they are separated for
 ever from God, from Heaven, and holy friends: see with what eyes they
 look on the heavens and on their friends: hear that farewell which they

^r Zeph. i. 12.^s Isaiah xxx. 27, 28.^t Rom. ii. 5.

shall say to their friends and acquaintances, their farewell for ever: and soon the earth opening her mouth swallows them up, crying and wailing most dismally;—most unhappy men mingled with devils, among whom are many kings, powerful men, prelates, nobles, ambitious and luxurious men. Stand and weigh in a just balance the world and its desires, and see how thou mayst escape such great dangers. Return thence to the elect, and in thought enter into Heaven with them, and rejoice with them. Lastly, draw near to the Lord Jesus, the Lamb most gentle, long-suffering, and patient; and beseech Him, for that He hath so bought and redeemed thee, never to cast thee away from His presence. I beseech Thee, O good Jesus, “enter not into judgment with Thy seryant, but deal Thou with me according to Thy loving mercy; for I know, Oh well I know, that in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” “What will ye do,” Thy Prophet hath said, “in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help?” Ah Lord, Thou knowest; O Love, truly, my God, there is no help, nor hope, nor consolation, but in Thee: Thou art my Helper, and my Refuge, my God, I will put my trust in Thee. Thou shalt deliver me from the snare of the hunter and from that rough word, Depart ye from Me. I would not be separated from Thy grace, even for one single moment: I would not be separated, Lord, from Thee; I would not leave Thee, the fountain of living water, neither now, nor ever. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A Short Prayer.

Oh most righteous Judge, I believe in Thee, and hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee. Oh how deceitful are the children of men on the weights! Oh how are Thy thoughts higher than our thoughts; but Thou judgest righteously, Who searchest the heart and reins, Thou art wise in heart and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Thee and hath prospered? How shall he be troubled on that tremendous Day, when the poor, and humble, and meek, and patient, are by

▪ Isaiah x. 3.

▪ Isaiah lv. 9.

▪ Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.

▪ Job ix. 4.

Thee pronounced blessed ! What shall I answer Thee, if now I neglect these virtues and the opportunities of practising them ? and how shall I be confounded in the face of the whole world ? O my Redeemer, enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for I mourn over my sins from my heart, and because I know it hath been written, " The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent^a," now a suppliant I pray Thee, O Goodness, now in this time while it is the time of mercy, have mercy upon me, after Thy great loving-kindness. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

O Lord, Who standest by me, and seest my groaning and my fear, " O that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldst keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past^b." For Thou wilt come, O most gentle Lamb, as " the Lion of the tribe of Judah : " " As a bear that is bereaved of her whelps^c," Thou wilt meet the wicked who now despise Thy warnings and inspirations to lead them to virtue ; and when that day shall be revealed, then the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of the heart be manifest. See now, I beseech Thee, O my Saviour ! if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Look into me, O Thou Who triest the heart, and see if there be any thing which I love beside Thee, or not because of Thee, and cast Thou that out. For I am

Application
to Commu-
nion.

Thy temple, Thine altar, Thy dwelling-place, in which even a thousand times I desire to receive and embrace Thee, this day. Suffer not Thy Father's house to be made a den of thieves. O hypocrite, and O thou luxurious and covetous man, and man of ambition, remember what thou art now turning in thy mind will be laid open to the whole world, on that day whereon there shall be to the sinner great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be : but they who love virtue, shall rejoice as men do in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil^d. To be humbled now for a little time, and with Thee to take the lowest place, to be hungry and thirsty, to suffer, to be despised, is grievous ; but then humility will be glorious, and will give confidence in the presence of Thy Majesty, O my Saviour and Redeemer. It is irksome now thus to oppose our own inclinations, and to follow the will of another ; but then the obedient and mortified shall have praise of Thee

^a 1 Sam. xv. 29.

^c Hosea xiii. 7.

^b Job xiv. 13.

^d Isaiah ix. 3.

before all the world. There patience shall shine together with the holy Cross; there the murmuring complainer shall wail with the wicked. Then the afflicted shall lift up their heads, because their redemption shall have come nigh. Then the boastful slave of this world shall be bound with everlasting bonds, and surrounded with tremendous flames. For there shall go before Thee a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about Thee; but there shall be refreshing in Thy Right hand and a crown for those who love Thee, and seek Thee with their whole heart. Oh how will then the wicked man wish to be numbered with the good! but in vain; for he who is now deaf to the admonitions of virtue, shall then with vice be adjudged to eternal fires: and wheresoever the tree shall have fallen, toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be^e. Who shall be able to think of Thy coming^f? Who can declare how sad will be the separation, from Thee Who art all good, and from Thine elect for ever? and that because for a moment, for a very little while in the race of this life, the wicked were unwilling to labour. "We wearied ourselves," they say, "in the way of wickedness and destruction: yea, we have gone through deserts where there lay no way: but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it. What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches, with our vaunting, brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, we had no sign of virtue to shew, but were consumed in our own wickedness^g." "They shall seek death, and shall not find it: and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them^h." But sweet and pleasant shall be the retribution to the good: to whom having been in tribulation for a little while, there shall be given eternal glory prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Then shall they sing a new song unto Thee, O Lord Jesus, because Thou hast triumphed gloriously in them, the horse and his rider (and those that troubled Thee) Thou hast cast into the sea of miseriesⁱ: but chiefly because there shall be no more sorrow, neither crying any more^k: "neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them^l," yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and may feast in Thy presence. Grant to me, most kind Jesus, for Thy mercies' sake, and love wherewith Thou hast loved us, so to live now, and cultivate this virtue (here consider some virtue to be acquired) that I may enjoy Thee for ever and know Thee, and love Thee with all my heart, and with all my soul. Amen.

^e Eccles. xi. 3.^g Wisdom v. 7—9, 13.ⁱ Exod. xv. 1.^l Isaiah xlix. 10.^f Mal. iii. 2.^h Rev. ix. 6.^k Rev. xxi. 4.

RULES FOR PRESERVING A RECOLLECTION OF THE JUDGMENT.

FIRST, consider that the things we behold shining and glittering in this world, are to be estimated at that price, at which they will be valued when the Lord shall come to judgment; for then will there be seen a true balance and the real value of all things.

Day of judgment the true balance.

Secondly, look upon all the things which we see here, as things which are about to be consumed in that terrible fire: and often exercise contempt for this world, and give up thyself to the things of eternity.

Vanity of the world.

Thirdly, often search into thine own heart, and say thus to thyself—Lo, what I now think, and what I now do, shall be made manifest to the whole world.

In the fourth place, reflect that all men will then be equal; and that nothing will be more intolerable to thee, than for the sake of any one man, especially one whom God hateth, to have done injury to Him, as worldly men do.

For a fifth rule, in every act of mortification consider which is better, to be put to confusion in the presence of the whole world, or merely before a few witnesses, or thy confessor only.

Sixthly, sometimes when you would stir up in yourself holy fear of God, to observe how all things admonish us of the Judgment. For as many religious persons as we see, so many judges do we behold: as many creatures, so many accusers, if we abuse them: the earth, the prison in which the criminals shall be shut up: the air, the tremendous seat of the Judge: as often as we perceive a noise, let us think of the crashing of the skies: as often as we hear profane or loose songs, of the lamentations of the damned: if we perceive sweet odours, let us think of the burning of the universe. In fine, let us reflect on what these things will be which we here behold.

All things may remind us of judgment.

Seventhly, in every choice of duty or of virtue, think what thou wilt wish to have done, when that Day shall have come. Now our eyes are veiled as it were with a charm, and judgment and reason are blinded: but then the insensate will perceive their own madness, and will say, "We fools counted their life madness, and their end to be without honour; how are they numbered amongst the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints."

Ejaculations.

"My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments."
Psalm cxix. 120.

"Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains, Thy judgments are like the great deep." Psalm xxxvi. 6.

"Who regardeth the power of Thy wrath, for even thereafter as a man feareth so is Thy displeasure." Psalm xc. 11.

"Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm cxliii. 2.

"That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste-ness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm." Zeph. i. 15, 16.

"The day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" Joel ii. 11.

IMAGE THE TWENTY-FIRST.

IF THOU ART STILL HESITATING IN THE CHOICE OF VIRTUE AND HOLINESS, CONSIDER HOW THROUGHOUT ALL ETERNITY THOU WILT WISH THOU HADST CHOSEN THE BETTER PART.

Before all things consider Eternity (A), and how the Saints in Heaven and the wicked in Hell now wish that they had more earnestly followed after holiness. O how long is Eternity ! Thou mayst reckon up the atoms of the sand on the shore (B), thou mayst count the drops of water in the sea (C), more easily than thou wilt number the years of eternity. Where the Tree shall once have fallen (D), whether it be toward the south or toward the north, there shall it for ever remain : nor beyond that will there be any more Time (E), nor Occasion (F), nor Death (G), excepting Death eternal. Behold, how even one Sin shutteth man up in Hell (H). Oh, how much would he that is for ever lost now give, if he could purchase but one little hour (I) in which he might repent ! But it is now all in vain, and he is derided by the evil spirit that deceived him (K). Look to it therefore, and take care what thou art now placing in that indelible record, and in which Eternity thou art writing (L). For thy thoughts, thy words, thine actions, when once past, are eternal, and can never be again undone. Oh, that thou wouldst be wise, that thou wouldst be wise in time !





On Eternity,

OR THE FIFTH MEANS OF INCREASING MEDITATION AND ITS FRUITS.

FOR the place of thy meditation consider the scene represented in the Image. And use the prayer on this subject.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, that as all streams return into the sea from whence they take their rise, so all temporal things tend to eternity: some things now corruptible, are waiting for everlasting incorruption; but others will return into their own nothingness, and will remain in that for ever. Contemplate therefore, as from an eminence, all created things, and weigh well in how short a time they will all have passed away like a shadow:—so many flowers, fruits, works, living creatures:—so that they shall never hereafter exist for ever: then turn thine eyes upon thyself, being assured that as those things, so will thy life pass away: and that likewise shall never again be renewed, except in the Judgment. Thus Xerxes looking down from a height upon his great army, and considering how short-lived the whole of that multitude would be, when he thought thereon he began to weep. But do thou, beholding the vanity of earthly things, through their winters and summers, life and death, despise those things which turn thee aside from virtue: and consider whether it were not reasonable for thee to fix wholly thine eyes and mind upon virtue, and eternal things.

How short-lived all created things.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER how short our life is, and that upon it afterwards depends a twofold eternity: of happiness or of misery; and that thou must of necessity have one or other for thy portion; and that it is now within thy power to follow virtue, and to procure the most

What eternity is.

happy eternity; or to follow vice, and to be the slave of eternal woes. What then, thinkest thou, ought to be done, and what art thou doing? Look here, and weigh what that eternity must be,—a space of time, that is, which is without any limit, incomprehensible, of utmost length.

How long it is. Within it are contained not only very many years, but even thousands of years, yea a thousand times ten thousand, and

millions upon millions, more than are the stars of Heaven, or the grains of sand which are upon the sea-shore, and the drops of rain, flowers on the trees or their leaves: yea, so much so that if a man were to reckon up the greatest possible number of years from the very beginning of the world unto the end of it, and then were to attempt to subtract this number from eternity, he could never even conceive so many, but that eternity would yet remain still whole, untouched, and entire. And now observe to what a degree eternity increaseth the punishments of the damned, wherein there is no intermission, no solace, not even *How dreadful to the wicked is eternity.* that of one drop of water, whereof there is no end, for their worm dieth not. Now go thou down alive into hell, and look into that vast lake, burning with fire and brimstone; behold there myriads of men, and among them prelates, priests, and monks, kings and rulers. See for instance how Cain, or the rich glutton, are tormented in all their senses and limbs. There with the eye of thy mind behold, how great is the fear in their souls, the grief, the shame, the deprecation, the rage, and indescribable madness—And lastly, give ear to the most bitter weepings and wailings, the curses which they cast with flaming and impious tongue against God and all good men. Ask of any one of them, what he now thinks of the world's glory and its delights, how he would spend one little hour towards gaining salvation, out of those which thou throwest away in idleness and tales. And from the sulphureous and foul smell that surrounds thee, taste how bitter is the cup of the Lord's anger. And contemplating these things among those waves of fire, then if those waves shall raise up any one to thy sight, as we see things come to the surface in a boiling cauldron, enquire what it is in all these woes which tormenteth most, and soon with horror and wailing and gnashing of teeth he will cry out, "eternity, eternity alone," in comparison with which, all their most grievous woes are light, and their torments, ease: ask then of him, how long he must have been there, and how long he will be there, and what solace he can look for; and he will answer, none. And again, look on him, as he goes down into the boiling surge, and is absorbed into it, and rolled into eternity. Are these things indeed true? and if true, do I live as though they were true? Do I despise things present, so as for the future eagerly to press after virtue?

THIRD POINT.

BUT now ascend, O my soul, unto mount Sion: draw near to thy Shepherd standing in the midst of His sheep, ready to embrace thee and fill thee full with the pleasures of His house. See the Saints sitting in the beauty of peace, in abundance and rest, as blessed to the full in all their senses and in all their limbs. Hearken to the most sweet song of those praising God: hear those who here follow virtue for one short hour, that they may have for ever that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. Ask now of the Angels that watch over thee, or of the Saints departed, what they think of the grief, or affliction, or humiliation, and what of the delights of this world: or what next to God doth most delight them in Heaven. Ask, and with indescribable exultation they will answer, it is that for one hour or one moment, they have gained the most blissful eternity. What is it to see God, and to love Him, and to be with Him, and to possess all good for ever in security, and in peace to enjoy all good and be free from all evil? Reason therefore thus with thyself, and see to what a pitch of madness hath man come, that he should prefer the torments of eternity and death, to life and everlasting joy. Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate. Lastly imagine, if thou canst, thyself, for one hour blessed, or (which God forbid) to be lost: and then ascertain what will be thy feeling of virtue: what of vice.

FOURTH POINT.

CONSIDER these words—Many are called but few are chosen: and see how it behoves thee to strive that by the constant practice of virtue, more especially of humility, thou mayst be numbered amongst the elect. These words also weigh thou well—Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. On the other hand, consider how greatly God and our Lord desire that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: how He giveth His own Blood to thee for drink, and His Body for food; how He promiseth every thing which He has, that thou mayst be willing to be blessed for ever, and to labour with Him for a season.

FIFTH POINT.

CONSIDER in every action and thought and speech which of these eternities thou wouldst choose : for whatever hath been once thought or said or done, will be for ever: for it can never be undone: and hereafter the same will be a bliss or torment to thee.

Nothing once
done can be
undone.

Therefore with mature deliberation let all thy works be performed, for there is no retracing our steps, nor any amendment which can be such that the things that are should be as if they had not been: but as some one used to say, We paint, we write for eternity: each work will bring praise or blame to its author for ever; for although through repentance sins may be blotted out, yet innocence is not restored.

A Short Prayer.

O King of kings, I believe in Thee and hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee. O eternity, eternity, most happy and most miserable! who knows thee, what thou art and what thou art not? when thou shalt begin, and when thou wilt end, thou boundless ocean? Who thinks of thee and is satisfied to laugh for a minute and to weep for ever? Who believes that thou art following us, and does not hasten forward in the race of virtue, that he may obtain the prize, which prize is and shall be nothing but Thee Thyself, O King immortal, invisible, Christ Jesus; O happy toil, which Thou, our eternal rest, awaitest: happy tears, which are followed by everlasting joy; happy grief and tribulation, which eternal glory succeeds, and Thine infinite love, O Jesu. No man, no man seemeth to believe, said one of old. O King of kings, Who wast made mortal that I might be immortal, Who wast born in time that I might live in eternity, direct, I pray Thee, my actions and my pursuits in such wise, that I may prefer the things eternal to those which are but for a moment: and that I may burn with love of Thee and enjoy all good, rather than be consigned unto everlasting flames.

A Longer Prayer.

O my God, eternal and incomprehensible, "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," and yet without beginning and without end, reaching from end to end. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy

dominion endureth throughout all ages. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the world was made, Thou art God from everlasting and world without end. And though all things shall wax old as doth a garment, yet Thou art the same, my God, and Thy years shall not fail: with Thee is no variableness, neither shadow of turning^a. But what are we but vessels of the potter, the work of Thy hands^b, a vapour which appeareth for a little time^c: we come forth like a flower, and are trodden under foot, we flee also as a shadow, and never continue in one stay^d; we are to-day, and to-morrow we appear not, and yet we are for ever, for ever we are to live. But where? where? where? Thou dost know. Oh that it might be with Thee! And in truth it shall be with Thee, if we follow Thee now, and these Thy counsels, (think over some particularly,) as we shall wish to have done in all eternity.

We indeed groan, as the whole creation doth, until "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality;" and thus it is that when it is given us to live here a little while, we sigh after a life that ends not: but then the way to it either we know not, or if we know it, we, alas, turn aside from it. Yet what is that life but to tread in Thy steps, Who art the Way by Thy example, the Truth in Thy promises, and the Life everlasting in reward. O when shall that day have come? When at length shall that day of eternity have arrived and shine upon us? O with what joy unspeakable shall we then be filled, if here we have followed Thee, and virtue, and obeyed Thy voice! Oh how pleasant will it be after many ages are past, that the whole yet remains; that after we have drunk of Thy pleasures as out of a river, an ocean of good things should yet remain, an inexhaustible sea, and eternal fountain. Oh happy hunger and thirst, thus at length to be satisfied! Oh happy contempt, which eternal honour exalts! Oh happy grief and toil of virtue, which is succeeded by rest and joy! How amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts: my soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: and light and for a moment appeareth every tribulation which worketh for us an eternal weight of glory.

But yet, since no man knoweth whether he be worthy either of love or hatred^e, fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and as much as Thy eternal glory invites me, so much doth everlasting punishment terrify me. I have however,—and with all my heart I give thanks to Thee for it,—I have, O my Love, a pledge of future glory, in Thy Body Application to Communion. and Blood so often given to me. And this is my whole confidence, for Thou hast said, and Thou canst not deceive, "This is the Bread

^a James i. 17.^b Isaiah lxiv. 8.^c James iv. 14.^d Job xiv. 2.^e Eccles. ix. 1.

that cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever." Therefore in the strength of this bread, which to-day I hope and burn to enjoy, I will go unto Thy mountain, even unto Horeb the mount of God^t: I will go from strength to strength, until unto the God of gods I come to appear in Sion.

I am yet a stranger and foreigner, I confess it, but alas, because my stay here is prolonged, my soul feels herself here too much at home. What shall I do? During the short space of this frail life I will enter into the house of my eternity, and have in mind the eternal years. And for what purpose? Surely in order that I may love Thee for ever, Who when rushing a thousand times into everlasting woes still preservest me. Certainly more than a thousand times hast Thou preserved me, that I for ever and ever may bless Thy Name throughout all ages, world without end. Oh what can be conceived more happy than the most happy eternity? What more wretched than one of misery? even the very thought of which is most bitter punishment, its duration most heavy torment, its very name, of all terrible things the most terrible. Oh how seldom, how seldom art thou in the minds of men! For who, O good Jesus, my Hope and my Salvation, who would be content to laugh a little and but for a moment, that he might weep for ever? How can it seem hard to any one who thinks of eternity, to give up through virtue the momentary comfort of the world? To whom will the toil of virtue seem severe, when he looks upon everlasting rewards? Thou dost offer eternal joys and honours, O Eternal Truth: the deceitful world, those of a moment. What throughout all eternity shall I wish to have chosen? What would that glutton wish he had done, who in torments for so many years was asking for one drop of water, but in vain? between the happy and the unhappy souls there is a great gulf fixed, and they are shut up in everlasting prisons even by one sin: in vain do they wish for one hour for saving themselves, who for so many years have hardened their hearts, that they should not know Thy ways, unto whom Thou hast sworn in Thy wrath that they should not enter into Thy rest. Grant me, most merciful God, so to consider my latter end, and eternity, that for ever and ever I may be able to praise Thee; rather than that Thee, Whom to-day most lovingly I do await for my good and eternal consolation, Who hast loved me and dost love, that Thee (I shudder at the very thought) I should hate and blaspheme. So a choice is given to me; do Thou, I beseech Thee, choose for me that I may love Thee. For what can I do without Thee, but perish and nothing else? And can I do this in Thy presence while Thou art looking on me? O my Hope, and Confidence, I am straitened on every side. This one thing only have I left,

^t 1 Kings xix. 8.

to direct my eyes to Thee; and since a choice is given me, and I must choose one or other, grant me, while I am free to choose, to choose Him for Whom I live and must die; in all my works and words and thoughts, to prefer rejoicing for ever because of Thee, to mourning and repentance. I know that all things once done, or said, or thought, will be eternal; that they never again can be undone; but either Thou wilt crown them for ever, or (which may God forbid) to Thy grief and to my eternal ruin, Thy justice shall for ever punish them. Lord, I pray Thee, by Thy mercy, that I may be able so to perform my works and to follow virtue, as throughout all eternity I shall wish, and as Thine everlasting Goodness shall wish me to have done. Amen.

RULES FOR FIXING DEEPLY IN THE MIND THE REMEMBRANCE
OF ETERNITY.

FIRST, often in things created observe their vanity; and be fully assured of this, that if thou shalt have denied thyself any of them, thou shalt have for a temporal thing something eternal: as for instance, if thou shalt have put away from thyself any honour, or money, or bodily comfort, or thine own will, in any matter for the sake of God, thou hast not lost it, but those things which were temporal, and but for a moment, thou hast thereby made to last for ever. Very efficacious is an exercise of this kind, especially if it be often really acted upon, or even brought before thy mind. For example, thou hast fixed thy affections far too much upon this book, picture, house, or field, or children; imagine then that they are taken from thee by God: or that He asks them of thee, that He may preserve them for ever, and make them everlasting. For so it happens in truth; those things which are an incumbrance to us in the way of God, because we love them too much, our kind and provident Father taketh them away from us, as we should take dress or playthings from children, in order that instead of them He may lay up eternal things for us. Nor let it be in will only that thou deniest thyself these things, but in reality when thou canst: either by giving alms, or by yielding, or by bearing reproach. This exercise, as thou seest, containeth within it resignation, which as it is a proof of perfection, so is it a singular help towards the attaining of it. Thou canst profitably exercise this, with regard to all things which thou dost possess, as in all points thou wouldst prepare thyself beforehand for battle. Imagine that it hath been commanded thee to change thy place, duty, habitation, to undergo some danger to thy life, and presently with a resigned, and even willing mind, offer these things with thyself to God, not as though thou wert about to lose them, but rather as about to make those things which thou lovest eternal. For that which our Saviour hath said of the soul, "that he who loseth his life shall find it," is likewise true of all other things. And thus exercise thyself not only in things

that are to come, but also in those that are past, in which thou hast found thy will repugnant, that so thou mayst correct it, and render it inclinable to better things.

Secondly, let every action be preceded by this thought, that when once done they can never be undone: and so provide beforehand that they may be such, as thou shalt for ever wish them to have been.

Thirdly, when actions are completed, call again the same to mind, and weigh well the speech and language that was brought forward, considering that what hath now been done or thought for a moment, hath become everlasting: for things once thought, or said, or done, can not be undone.

Æ{aculations.

"Man is like a thing of nought, his time passeth away like a shadow."
Psalm cxliv. 4.

"The days of man are but as grass, for he flourisheth as a flower of the field."
Psalm ciii. 15.

"When the breath of man goeth forth, he shall turn again to his earth, and then all his thoughts perish." Psalm cxlv. 3.

"Thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in respect of Thee, and verily every man living is altogether vanity. For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain." Psalm xxxix. 6, 7.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the godly, and their inheritance shall endure for ever." Psalm xxxvii. 18.





IMAGE THE TWENTY-SECOND.

ATTEND TO THE EXAMPLES OF THE SAINTS, AND TO THEIR SAYINGS
RESPECTING ANY VIRTUE WHICH THOU ART DESIROUS TO ATTAIN.

That thou mayst the more powerfully be stirred up to Virtue, search out (A) and follow the examples of the Saints, such as suffered from the hatred and persecution of the world. Many a one hath desired to do so, but alas, some Sin hath intervened and entangled and drawn him back from so holy a purpose (B). Weigh with thyself what they thought and wrote of virtue, and how they practised it; they on whom the Holy Spirit shed His inspirations (C), those humble and contrite ones with whom He came to dwell. Take the blessed Virgin (D) as an example of humility; St. Paul (E), of zeal; St. Jerome (F) and St. Anthony, of penitence and devotion; the Martyrs (G), of patience. Consider what the philosophers (H) of old, who only lived in the shade of Virtue (I), thought concerning it, and how they practised it. Why dost thou not imitate even these? "The men of Nineve," says our Saviour, "shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here!" And the same did He say of the Queen of the South, who came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. This we ought to receive also concerning the ancient philosophers, and by their labours after the shadow of Virtue, to stimulate ourselves to the attainment of the substance and reality.

On the Imitation of the Saints,

OR THE SIXTH MEANS OF INCREASING MEDITATION AND THE FRUITS THEREOF.

FOR the place of thy Meditation consider the Image. And use the prayer annexed.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER that besides the great light of day, God has given to the Saints, like world many other luminaries, that they may afford us light stars. during the night: in like manner, we have besides CHRIST, the blessed Virgin, and the other Saints in the Church, giving themselves as the companions and guides of our journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. See whether you are following them; and observe how they, by the endurance of many evils, by humility, and perseverance, and courageous determination in overcoming their evil inclinations and affections, have arrived at that excellent virtue. In what manner are you striving to attain to it? Secondly, how greatly have they glorified God, each of them by his own example provoking innumerable others to follow CHRIST, and His laws: shining, as the Apostle says, like lights in the dark place of this world^a. Recount the names of some of these Saints of God, the glorious but difficult victories which they obtained over themselves by refusing honours, and the pleasures and desires of the flesh. They were stoned, says the Apostle, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth^b: and all these things they endured, that they be found approved by the evidence of their faith, and might attain to virtue. And surely with good reason, for since virtue is

Labours of
the Saints in
acquiring vir-
tue.

^a 2 Pet. i. 19.

^b Heb. xi. 37, 38.

so excellent, what wonder is it, if poor mortals toil so much for perishable riches, that good men should put forth as much zeal and labour in acquiring those that are eternal.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that these Saints, as the Apostle says, were men like ourselves. Elias, he says, was a man subject to like passions as we are. Formed out of the same mass, they were by the very law of human nature, subject to the same sufferings of body and mind; and observe, that many of them at first were great sinners, for instance, St. Matthew, St. Paul, the Magdalene, and what sort of persons afterwards they turned out to be in the sight of God by His grace. And let each one for himself take cognizance of what man is by nature, and what and how great he may through grace become. What sort of a person wert thou used to be? what art thou now? and what sort of person dost thou hope to become, by acting as thou now art doing? And now look not only at the sins which they committed before their conversion, but also at those which some of the Saints were guilty of after that time, as for example, Moses, David, Peter; hence also gather thine own wretchedness, and the Divine mercy. From thence proceed, and behold how great they became in the sight of God, how faithful, brave, patient, humble lovers of God: and then compare thine own weak, feeble virtue with theirs. "Shew," says God to Ezekiel, "the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern^c;" and let them be ashamed of all the things which they have done. Now what is this temple but, as St. Gregory interprets it^d, the life of the Saints whom God, Who is wonderful in His Saints, gives us for an example? Place then before your eyes the Saints of God; consider the blessed Virgin Mary, as the pattern of holiness and piety; the woman in whom God our Immanuel placed His tabernacle. Think on her heroic virtues, and strive to imitate them, especially her humility, and her love. Secondly, observe that the Saints were not so prevented by Divine grace, as to have attained to virtue without any labour of their own: for by many watchings, and austerities, and prayer as it were without ceasing, they gained these gifts from the Divine Goodness: and how unworthy is it in us to feel assured that we shall obtain these things by acting idly and carelessly, or certainly by doing very little, if we compare ourselves with them. Bonaventura supposes the blessed Virgin thus addressing some one; "Know you for

Penitence
and fervor of
the Saints.

Solomon's
temple a
type of per-
fection.

Labour and
industry of
the Saints.

^c Ezek. xliii. 10.

^d Greg. Moral., lib. xxiv. cap. 11.

certain that I thought myself guilty, most vile, and unworthy of the grace of God, like as you do: and therefore I sought accordingly after grace and virtue. Daughter, you think that I might have had every grace I had without labour; but it is not so. Nay, I tell you for a truth that I had no grace, gift, or virtue from God without great toil, constant prayer, ardent longing, profound devotion, many tears, much grief, and by continually speaking and meditating on things pleasing to Him." Know for certain, that no grace descends into the soul but by prayer, and afflicting the body. Thirdly, consider how diligent the Saints were in acquiring and retaining even the smallest protection for the virtues. Hence some by a continual vow restrained their tongue, others their eyes, others their hands: whoso despiseth small things shall fall by little and little, and there is generally more danger from lukewarmness in small matters, than from great sins.

The Saints
watch even
the smallest
matters.

THIRD POINT.

In the first place reflect, with how great perseverance, from earliest infancy even to death, the Saints advanced in the course of virtue; for he only that endureth to the end shall be saved. Watch therefore thy own inconstancy, and hate it. Secondly, consider how they have procured perseverance; by using the grace of God, and not leaving His talents unemployed, they daily obtained an increase of grace: and thus their path, like the shining light, increased more and more unto the perfect day. Hope this also from the Lord, and follow after the better gifts of grace. Thirdly, consider how by a noble fortitude they attained to the difficult heights of virtue, and overcame all obstacles, parents, wealth, children, bad habits; and "in a short time they fulfilled a long time." Do thou also choose the best mode of life, and custom will make it even pleasant; and this weigh with attention. Approach God the Father in all sincerity, and together with all the company of Heaven offer up thy praises for all the labours His Saints endured for the love of Him; and beseech Him for yourself and others, that you may obtain grace to imitate their endeavours in the love of Him: think over habitually their fervent charity: give thanks to Him for all those Saints whom He has raised up as examples here on earth; and give thanks also for the glory to which they have now attained: congratulate and rejoice with them for the successful termination of their labours, even as they with most burning love desire thy salvation and thy perfection in all holiness.

The perse-
verance of
the Saints.

Good habits
of great con-
sequence.

A Short Prayer.

O Thou Who art our Way and Life, Jesus Christ, I believe in Thee, and I hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee. I wish to follow Thee, like as Thy Saints have done; if they were able, it was through Thee alone, for we are not able to do any thing of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of Thee, and all our help is procured from Thee. I am confounded and blush at their zeal, and my lukewarmness, at their constancy, and my own instability. And I stedfastly resolve in Thy sight, not only to follow those things which Thou commandest, but whatsoever things Thou counsellest, and inspirest by Thy grace; that I may honour Thee, and that men seeing my good works may glorify Thee, and that my soul may bless Thee, and all that is within me may magnify Thy holy Name. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

O Saviour of the world, Thou art indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and our Guide in this our journey to eternity, which we can never repeat: and hast also given Thy Saints as examples and leaders in our pilgrimage thither. I beseech Thee, by the bowels of Thy mercy, that Thou wouldst give me Thy grace, by which I may be enabled eagerly to follow their guidance; so that I may walk in true humility, charity, and all other virtues, which Thy most holy will, and my profession demand of me. I am filled with shame, O Lord Jesus, because I have hitherto disregarded so bright examples, and Thy most holy inspirations: ought they not to have drawn me after the odour of Thy sweet ointments? O Lord Jesus, formerly when many of Thy disciples went back, Thou didst ask Thy Apostles, Will ye also go away? But they answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. What therefore must I do and say to Thee, Who hast so often given me Thy Body, and Thy Blood, that I might follow Thee, that I might cleave inseparably to Thee? And what shall separate me from Thy love? For truly I see that all created things are nought, not only are they vanity, but vanity of vanities. Alas! do such interests as these drive me to wander from the path of virtue, from Thee, my way and my life? when so many, and such illustrious Saints, lights not of this world, for their souls were inspired by Thy Holy Spirit, would

Self-confu-
sion.Application
to Holy Com-
munion.

hold up a torch to me ; and when Thy mercy, O good Jesus, is so constant, and Thy love strong as death.

O that it were now my delight,—as I so earnestly long to reign for ever with Thy Saints, and to praise Thee,—O that it were now my delight, for the short moment of this life, to fight with those that thus bravely conquered self. But if indeed I shall be found slothful, how disgraceful will it be for me to appear together with Thy Saints, those noble champions, in the presence of Thee, my King and my God, when they with joy will recount to Thee their glorious victories, which they achieved by Thy grace. There shall Thy blessed Mother, made the handmaid of Elizabeth, and obedient to Joseph, and acknowledging herself the least of all, take up her hymn of praise, and magnify Thee, her Lord, with all her soul, because Thou hast exalted her, inasmuch as she abased herself. Then shall be confounded the children of hell, whom knowledge inflateth, power exalteth, and riches fill with pride ; yea, and there is, I know not how, a sort of religion itself which increases self-confidence, but which is not from Thee, Who art meek and lowly in heart. Then the Apostles, who lived here in poverty, in grief, in distresses, and in self-denying penitence, shall rejoice exceedingly, and shall receive an hundred-fold ; then shall they sit upon twelve thrones, because they forsook all things, and followed Thee, and gave up their lives for Thee. Then shall the disputers of this world, and its rich men, and the delicate and half-hearted professors of religion be confounded.

There Abraham, obedient to Thy word, and an innumerable crowd of devout worshippers, shall set up a trophy of love, on account of their self-denials : and because they have denied their own will here, they shall enjoy it there uninterruptedly. But how shall he then join himself to them, who was accustomed to obey only when he himself approved, and to bend his superiors to his will ; who in whatever degree he seemed advanced in his spiritual life, became in the same degree more tardy in his obedience : who claimed to himself more and more of his own self-will, the longer he had been in attempting to eradicate that accursed plant : who obeys with greater difficulty, the longer he has been taught to obey ? Then at last shall the lilies of chastity have their pure white robes, and the hosts of Virgins, and of Saints, who, like Job, have made a covenant with their eyes, that they should not think upon a maid, these all shall follow Thee, the Lamb. O how will they leap for joy in that life, who have in this most diligently guarded the doors of their senses, and given themselves to the study of solid and perfect virtues. I desire, therefore, O Lord my God, continually so to direct my life, that I may not be confounded in the sight of Thy Saints and of Thy Divine Majesty, neither when I speak with my enemies in the gate, at my departure from this life. Assuredly will I,

Manners of
the Luke-
warm.

who am but dust and ashes, put my trust in Thine infinite goodness, trusting that Thou wilt not deny me Thy grace.

Grant me, O God, that adorned with virtues I may be enabled to carry forth Thy Name, and to draw and convert other souls to Thee, Desire for
zeal. that with me in Heaven they may praise and magnify Thy glorious Name, who now on account of my sins, and those of Thy servants, blaspheme it. For truly has one of Thy servants^e said, that the Apostles converted the world, not because miracles made them objects of wonder, but on account of their contempt for riches, their disregard for glory, their total severance from all the concerns of this life: which things if they had not had, although they raised the dead, it would not have profited them, but they would have been accounted deceivers. Grant me, O most merciful Lord, to follow their footsteps, to avoid even the smallest failings, that strangers may not devour my strength^f; grant that I may run along the way of Thy commandments, and not fail. For no one shall be crowned with the Saints and Thy elect, but he who striveth lawfully. No one shall enter with Thee, O Spouse of our souls, into the eternal wedding, but he who shall continually be watching and looking out for Thy coming: for he that endureth to the end, alone shall be saved: Thou wilt manifest Thyself to him, Thou wilt make him to sit down at Thy table, Thou wilt give Thyself to him. This hope is laid up in my bosom: for whatever the reward is, if it be not Thee, it is worthless to me, for I desire nothing but Thee, except so far as I am able to desire other things for Thy sake.

O most glorious Son of the Virgin, hear, I beseech Thee, the prayers which I this day pour out before Thee; and I most humbly beg that Thou wilt grant to me, whom with Thy Apostles Thou didst commend to Thy Father^g, the ornaments of all the virtues, a contempt for all human things, purity of heart and body, humility and charity; all this I beg, most unworthy though I am, but for the sake of Thine own prayer I beseech Thee to hearken to my petitions. Fountain of pity, Thou wilt not turn a deaf ear to my entreaty; for Thou canst give all things to Thy faithful worshippers, to whom Thou art indeed the gate of life, the anchor of safety, the haven, the hope, the solace, and the refuge.

O blessed souls, who have now that eternal felicity for your portion, do ye now regard me, your most unworthy brother, who am still an exile and sojourner in this place of vast horror and solitude? would that I might imitate your examples, and love Jesus, and together with you might praise Him to all eternity!

O Guardian Angel, who in the mirror of most refulgent Deity beholdest my dangers, and my backslidings, and the occasions of them, may my steps

^e Chrys. Hom. xlvii. In Matt. Op. imperf.

^f Hosea vii. 9.

^g John xvii. 20.

be so directed into the right way, that thou mayst not have to grieve for me, but rejoice over me for ever!

O ye watchful spirits, that yearn over the returning penitent, may I amidst my numerous enemies be so compassed about by your guardianship, that no evil may happen unto me, nor any plague come nigh my dwelling. For the Lord Jesus, when living and dying, gave unto you His Angels charge concerning me, to keep me in all my ways. O may ye also, most brave champions, be to me my examples and my guardians, that I may see my desire upon mine enemies, and together with you may to all eternity praise and glorify Jesus Christ, my Lord and your Lord, my Father and your Father, in the land of the living. Amen.

RULES FOR IMITATING THE SAINTS.

The exam-
ples of the
Saints as
sweet-smell-
ing fruits. In the first place, diligently study the lives of the Saints, and moreover collect from among them different examples of the virtues: and often in your mind go through some remarkable example suited to your own private examination. This is a powerful antidote and remedy, and is like the odoriferous apple, spoken of in the Book of the Canticles, by which you may refresh the powers of your soul.

The imita-
tion of a
Saint. Secondly, endeavour to conform thyself to the character and virtues of some particular Saint; to this the Apostle Paul exhorts us when he says, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Of the efforts
to follow a
Saint's ex-
ample. Thirdly, diligently read over the life of the holy person whom you have selected; and strive to imitate his virtues, and implore assistance from Heaven to do so: and thus both in life and at death his example will afford you assistance and guidance.

Saints' Days
of the Church. Fourthly, of singular use and advantage towards this end are the Saints' Days appointed by the Church, if devoutly and carefully observed; having this peculiar efficacy above all, that as thus prescribed by authority there sinks thereby into the heart the weight and power of obedience; which always has a blessing.

A daily exer-
cise. Fifthly, it is also a praiseworthy exercise to portion out subjects of meditation for the several hours of the day; as for instance, at the fourth hour in the morning that of Creation, praying for the assistance of God in the reformation of the soul; at the fifth, that of Christ's sufferings, praying for imitation of the same; at the sixth, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, praying for purity of mind; at the seventh, the burning Seraphim, praying for charity; at the eighth, the Cherubin full of knowledge, praying for a sense of God's presence; at the ninth, Thrones, praying for peace of mind; at the tenth, Dominions, praying for victory over passions; at the eleventh, Principalities, praying for humility; at the twelfth, Powers, praying to overcome evil with good. Or again, at the first think of the Celestial Hosts, desiring

effectually to aid our neighbours; at the second, of Archangels, to obtain obedience; at the third, of Angels, to edify all by meekness; at the fourth, of Patriarchs, in longing for eternal life; at the fifth, of Apostles, in zeal for souls; at the sixth, of Martyrs, for the grace of mortification; at the seventh, of Confessors, for the gift of prayer; at the eighth, of Virgins, for chastity and abstinence; at the ninth, of all Saints, in longings for our true home and country. But this last rule, respecting the names of things in Heaven and those blessed societies, is only suited for very few.

Æjaculations.

"O love the Lord, all ye His saints: for the Lord preserveth them that are faithful, and plenteously rewardeth the proud doer." Psalm xxxi. 26.

"Be strong and He shall establish your heart; all ye that put your trust in the Lord." Psalm xxxi. 27.

"A small thing that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly." Psalm xxxvii. 16.

"The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Psalm xxxvii. 30.

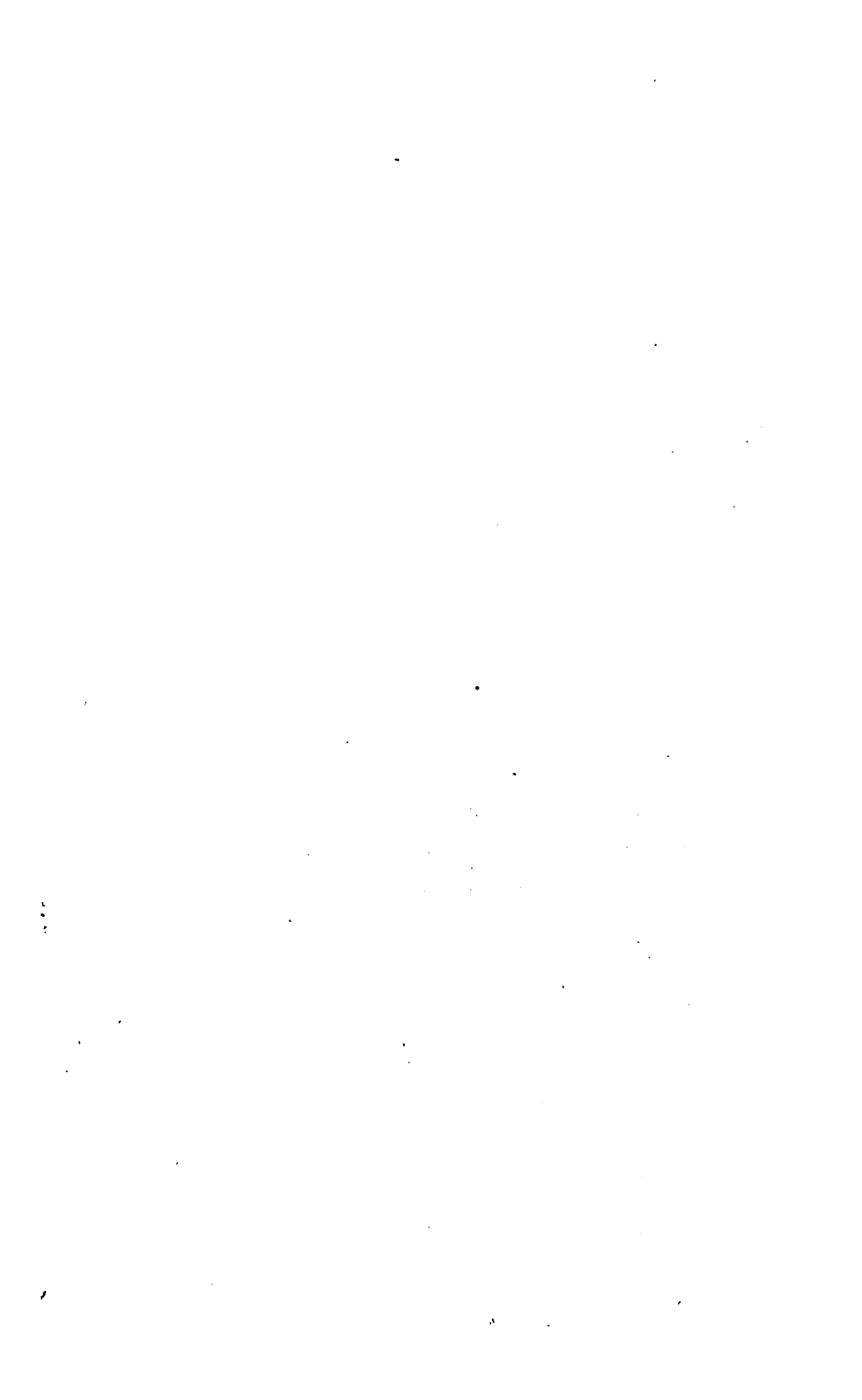
"Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last." Psalm xxxvii. 38.

IMAGE THE TWENTY-THIRD.

OH, HOW GREAT PEACE WOULDST THOU HAVE, IF THOU WOULDST CULTIVATE VIRTUE! CAREFULLY WEIGH THIS WITH THYSELF.

Consider how great the peace thou wouldst enjoy, how great and true the honour thou wouldst attain, if thou wouldst give up thyself to the practice of virtue. This has been the experience of all holy men (A). For Virtue (B) is ever united with Peace (C); one beareth the palm-branch of future reward, the other hath the olive-bough of present tranquillity. Thus is it when Jesus Christ cometh to be in the heart, for in Him alone the soul findeth rest. Consider, I pray you, with what feelings the great and the poor alike have visited the humble abodes of the Saints (D), and have lingered with holy reverence about their tombs (E): and point out at a distance to the cities wherein they have dwelt (F). Yea, the places of their earthly habitation have been far more blessed than by the feelings of men; for even in this world Angels minister unto them (G), and God Himself delights to be with them, and is pleased to call Himself their God. How different, on the contrary, are the lives of the children of this world! how little of real peace is theirs, although they may obtain all the objects of their desires! Vice still harasses, disquiets, and saddens her votaries (H), even in the midst of their highest worldly delights and vanities (I).





On the Peace and Calm of Mind

WHICH SPRINGS FROM VIRTUE, OR THE SEVENTH MEANS OF
INCREASING MEDITATION AND ITS FRUITS.

FOR the place of thy Meditation consider the Image. And use the prayer attached.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER that the pursuits and thoughts of men aim at this one object, the obtaining of peace and quiet of mind. The covetous All things seek peace. gainer of this world seeks nothing else, the ambitious and the curious have no other object, than to satisfy with failing things the ever-longing and yearning soul, and to be able to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease." For the desire indeed of all terrestrial things are like powers that set in motion and urge on wretched men, until they may attain the enjoyment of the objects they desired, and find peace in them; which, after all, man never can in them attain, but is obliged at last to exclaim, In all things have I sought Peace is not in vain goods. peace, and have not found it. For even if he were to possess the whole world he will be still equally far from peace, and indeed even a thousand times more disquieted:—a fact which hath been set forth more clearly than the light of day by the mighty men of this world. What madness is it then to seek earnestly after earthly things, while we know for a surety that there is no repose to be found in them, and not to seek peace in Thee, O most sweet Jesus? Consider in the second place, whence it is that the lovers of this world fail to find peace in earthly things, when they obey vice and fall away from virtue. Why there is no peace to the wicked. First, it is because peace and quiet can only then exist when war is not: and while the carnal man is following his desires, he is carrying on war against reason, and law, and God; he is arming

the inferior feelings and passions of his soul against reason, and is causing them to be in conflict with her, yea even to fight against God. How then can peace be there? for, who, saith Job, hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered^a? and Baruch: "If thou hadst walked in the way of God thou shouldst have dwelled in peace for ever^b:" and the reason of this is because the followers of virtue subject their desires to reason, and subject their reason unto God, and have one will with Him. Weigh well with thyself the equity and beauty of this, and detest vice. If the mind, saith St. Leo, be subject to its own

In what
peace con-
sists.

ruler, and take delight in gifts from above, and hath trodden under foot the enticements of earthly pleasure, and hath not allowed sin to reign in its mortal body;—then reason shall have a most excellently ordered governance, and its defences no illusion of spiritual evils shall shake: for then is the true peace of man, and true liberty, when the flesh is ruled by its judge, the mind, and the soul is governed by God, its Guardian. In the second place, disturbance of mind ariseth from this, that vice and desire have for their object some

Another
cause of dis-
quietude.

passing, changing, perishable thing; upon this man fixes his soul, and so fixed, it must needs be continually revolving, fluctuating, and changing, together with that object to which it is attached; just like a ship in a stormy sea, driven to and fro by the winds, and dashed against the rocks: virtue, on the other hand, unites the soul to God, "with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" and in Him it finds rest; like the needle of the compass on the pole, and the element on its own centre. See now on what object thy mind is fixed, and deny that thing to it. A sick mind, like a sick body, keeps turning itself on every side, but in vain. Change there is of evils, but no remedy of them; if the palate be diseased, variety of food will not bring taste and flavour, but increase discomfort.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER in the third place, that there ariseth disquiet of mind in the sinner, from a continual dread and apprehension which accompanies vice: for he fears before he obtains his desire, lest he should fail in the pursuit; and yet more does he fear when he has obtained it, lest he should lose it: but most of all, lest when he shall have been deprived of it, he may not be able to recover it; lastly, he fears the vengeance of God, when he is opposed to His will, and is His enemy. And Job elegantly expresses this, "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them!"

^a Job ix. 3.

^b Bar. iii. 13.

God distributeth sorrows in His anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away^c." "But the righteous are bold as a lion^d." Say ye, saith the Lord to the righteous, it shall be well with him. David had learnt this from experience when he said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me:" "though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid:" for the righteous man seeketh God only and possesses Him, because His dwelling-place is at Salem, that is in peace^e.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER in the first place any other cause besides these, from whence disquietude ariseth in the mind of a wicked man; inasmuch, forsooth, as he is not able to satisfy his own will: for he finds Another cause of disquiet. that many have a different will, yea, moreover, are opposed to him: since he may have many competitors and rivals, aiming at the same object, and many cannot of course be in possession of the same. But good men, and such as are studious of virtue, always accom- The good man doeth always his own will. plish their own will, because they have no will which is other than the Divine will; and therefore there is nothing which can oppose it. For he who hath no will of his own, is always doing his own will; and so, in fact, from being unwilling to gratify our own will, we are found to have always gratified it, as St. Dorotheus used to say. In this way such a man doeth all things according to his own pleasure, and thus, continually rejoicing, his mind hath a continual feast: and as "the fool changeth like the moon^f," so the holy man abideth in wisdom like the sun, and is the imitator of God. In the second place observe, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. But so great is the slavery of vice and of the vicious man, that although he may see himself unable to do his own will, yet he is not allowed to be at rest: for "the horse-leach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give^g," saith the Wise man: thus the drunkard, although he be unable to drink wine, yet being the servant of sin he is ordered to long for it, and sigh after it: so that although honour, and good fame, and the laws may forbid, yet the luxurious man is still constrained to obey his luxury or drunkenness; and so likewise with the other vices, for the same servitude is common to all. But he who is endowed with virtue, fears God only: he is apprehensive of no man's judgment: he is a suppliant to no man, and dependant on no man; but standing as it were in a lofty position above the world, he

^c Job xxi. 17, 18.^d Prov. xxviii. 1.^e Psalm lxxvi. 2.^f Eccclus. xxvii. 11.^g Prov. xxx. 15.

triumphs in true and golden liberty. Glorious, saith Ambrose, is that liberty, which is bound by no slavery to failings, no chains of sins; which no burdens of crimes committed, no intercourse with deeds of wickedness, gives over to the bond of a degenerate servitude.

FOURTH POINT.

CONSIDER that the wicked man, even if he be able to do his own will, is yet not at all the more at peace: because his will striveth against God's: and therefore his conscience is continually agitated with doubts, and "no guilty man is acquitted himself being the judge," while his conscience is accusing him with truth, and at the same time both condemning and exacting punishment by tormenting him. Oh what a hell do sinners find this to be; and not they only who have fallen by grievous sins, but they also who are the slaves of their failings, who do not study the mortification of their depraved affections. Besides this, observe on the other hand, what great consolation the righteous man hath from peace of mind; learn it from the delightful aspect of a calm sky, and air, and sea; see what are the fruits of peace in a government, and transfer these reflections to thy soul. But of the greatness of this peace of which we speak, hear what St. Paul says when he calls it "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;" for truly nothing can be compared with it: and "a merry heart" hath been well called by the Wise man, "a continual feast:" it passeth all comprehension, neither shall gold or silver be of any value when compared with it. How great a thing is it, saith Ambrose, not to be moved or disturbed by fear, not to be harassed by suspicion, nor vexed by grief, but as it were on a most safe shore, sheltered from all the rising waves of this world's storms, to have a mind unmoved and at peace, in a harbour which we may trust.

FIFTH POINT.

CONSIDER in how great honour true virtue is held, even when it is found in a most mean and obscure person: so much so that even among the heathens, in the vestals and sacred persons, a sort of unreal and painted form of virtue was held in the very highest estimation, and even now is. We read how emperors and the mighty ones of the world have honoured living Saints: they have earnestly asked for their prayers and intercessions for them with God, they have venerated their cottages as holy places, they have approached them for their advice, considering them as the oracles of God. To the holy Antony,

How great
the honour
paid to vir-
tue.

saith Athanasius, a man hidden in the farthest extremity of the world, the royal courts of princes and kings do honour, when they were discussing concerning Constantine and his sons. The sepulchres of the Saints are as it were an asylum, a lightening of all evils; even in death they speak peace; yet if you look to their descent and other external goods, they were held by men in no repute a little before, nor would they be esteemed now, were they void of virtue. In the second place, see how true and substantial this honour is, when all other honour is altogether vain. For as St. Chrysostom says, those voices of the people when they raise acclamations in favour of their governors, are not expressions of truth, but they are but like the false representations and unreal images of true honour; which clearly appears when the power of such persons is at an end. "The memory of the just is blessed," saith the Wise man, "but the name of the wicked shall rot^b." Virtuous men were said of old to be kings, and truly they are braver and better, who rule their own spirits, than he that taketh a city¹; for they are the intimate friends of the highest of Kings, Who when He willet to honour His friends, what doth He not bestow upon them? Many are the Saints of old who bear witness to the unspeakable condescension and favours of God, Who deigned to visit them in their lowly estate, and gave them to know the delights of that intimacy which He speaks of in promising to make them His friends. And what would His Angels do when they see their King to honour us with such condescension? Behold how true that saying is, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." But how great is the ignominy of vice, is plain from the daily punishments of the guilty, both what it is, and how great it is; let this shame the wicked of their wickedness. There can be no one so powerful, or so wise, who if he be a slave to his vices will not at last be made a laughing-stock to his own people, a mockery to his friends and foes: and true even now are found to be those words of the blessed Paul, "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil;" "but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good!"

True honour
belongs to
virtue.

How God
honours His
Saints.

Observe this
point.

A Short Prayer.

O Prince of Peace, I believe in Thee, and hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee: lift up, I pray Thee, Thy countenance on me,

^b Prov. x. 7.

¹ Prov. xvi. 32.

and give me peace, for Thy mercies' sake, and for Thy love's sake. Thy place is in peace, let Thy place then be in the peace of my heart, and it is all I need: it sufficeth me. For if Thou wilt come unto me, Thou the Fountain of living waters, Thou wilt extend peace to me like a river; and I shall have the hidden treasure; and I hope that I shall no more be separated from Thee. "For who hath hardened himself against Thee, and hath prospered?" No man: therefore I do desire to have peace with Thee, and with myself, that the law in my members may not war against the law of my mind, but that my will may be one with Thine; and my aversions one with Thine, that Thou mayst be one with me, and All in All to me. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

O true Rest, O Joy of the whole earth, look upon our affliction, in which we seek the cisterns, the broken cisterns which can hold no water. In all things our heart seeketh rest, all that exist desire peace and tranquillity: for in this state of unhappy exile, where our life is a warfare, our only happiness is to find peace: for this end are we justified by faith, that we may have peace with God, through Thee, our Lord Jesus Christ. The labours of all men look to this end, this the luxurious, and covetous, and ambitious seek; but in vain; for there is no peace to the wicked; there is no peace but for them that love Thy law. Thou hast brought it us from Heaven, O most Gracious Jesus, and hast come to declare it to the world. Truly Thou art the "Prince of Peace," "the Corner Stone," Who hath made both one: and in Thyself Thou dost reconcile the lowest with the highest. O how great is the felicity of that soul which by virtue Thou dost elevate above the storms of this life, fixed in holy contemplation; he will fear no evil, for Thou art with him: his heart will not be agitated with lusts, for Thou alone art all things to him; in prosperity and adversity his soul is without fear and at rest; as though he stood on some point above the world, and looked down upon all things beneath him.

O Thou Who art our only peace, my God, would that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret place of the stairs. For Thou hast come that I might have peace: and at Thy death didst bequeath peace for me, saying, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." Be merciful unto me, O Lord, that I give not Thine heritage, which Thou hast left to me sealed with Thy Blood, for any poor fading and transitory object of this world. Thy dwelling-place is at Salem, which is peace; nor wouldst Thou have a temple built for Thee, except by Solomon, which is a name of peace; nor wouldst

Thou be born but in a time of peace: nor wouldst Thou die, but to obtain peace for us. Therefore if I have peace, then am I assured that Thou the God of peace and love art with me; and what then will there be that I can ask for more? For that peace passeth all understanding. Oh that I might taste that peace, and see how gracious Thou art, O Lord; and in comparison of Thy Body and Blood, O my Creator, may all creatures be as bitterness to me. O how great, O how great is the felicity of the peaceful heart, to have Thee, and enjoy Thee, and be refreshed by Thee, and to feed on Thee, to desire nothing, to fear nothing, to hope nothing, to will nothing, save Thee and Thy holy will; to be distressed by no stings of conscience, at every hour to be prepared for death, and for Thy coming. If any one hath tasted this peace, saith Thy servant Bernard, I know not whether such a soul would consider even hell itself for a time a more dreadful punishment, than after once tasting the sweetness of this spiritual contemplation, to go forth again to the allurements, or rather to the troubles of the flesh, and to seek again that curiosity of the senses which nothing can satisfy. Nor is it peace only, Thou dost give to virtue, but by a perpetual decree of Thy Divine Majesty true honour also follows it. For that man who restraineth himself by a kind of royal power, is called a king, because he knows how to rule himself: he is the governor of himself, and his own law; he is not led captive by feelings, nor borne headlong into sin. And thus it is that virtue alone truly merits honour; neither empires nor victorious chaplets can make wickedness honourable; a poor man endued with virtue is deservedly in higher estimation with all men than all the power of the world. For each man is only so great, as he is in Thine eyes; for surely them that honour Thee Thou wilt honour, Lord, and they that despise Thee shall be lightly esteemed. Truly hath Thy Psalmist exclaimed, "How dear are Thy counsels unto me, O God; O how great is the sum of them." But since Thou hast vouchsafed in Thine infinite pity to choose me for Thy friend, for Thou hast made known to me all Thy commandments and counsels which Thou hast received from Thy Father, I will not to be the friend of this world, but Thee alone will I love with all my heart and mind, Thee hold fast in the embraces of my soul, until the day dawn and the shadows flee away,—until Thou shew Thyself to me, and open the treasures of Thy love, wherewith Thou hast loved me before the world began. Amen.

RULES FOR OBTAINING PEACE OF MIND.

FIRST, often resign thyself in this or some similar way: "My God, my All, in all things may Thy most holy will be done." Each person may propose

different things to himself, that so he may prove his mind, whether or no it will refuse to obey; and thus learn to resign himself.

Secondly, if ought adverse happens, to keep thy mind collected, and think, "Peace is of as much and greater value than this; and as man gives up all for life, so let him lose all rather than peace."

Thirdly, frequent and humble confession.

Fourthly, above all things is meekness, and to drive out from thy mind all bitterness and suspicion.

Fifthly, avoid too much business. Martha was careful and troubled about many things. Of this Jethro also admonished Moses.

In the sixth place, frequent perusal of Holy Scripture: for the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable.

Seventhly, diligent watchfulness over the senses.

Ejaculations.

"The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. iv. 7.

"O Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is disquieted until it rest in Thee." St. Augustin.

"Great is the peace which they have who love Thy law, and they are not offended at it." Psalm cxix. 165.

"I will lay me down in peace and take my rest, for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety." Psalm iv. 9.



IMAGE THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

O HOW GREAT THE JOY WHICH EVER FOLLOWETH VIRTUE! LET THIS CONSIDERATION AT LEAST DRAW THEE ON TO THE ATTAINMENT OF IT.

The whole World (A) cannot fill thy heart, which is ever being agitated by the blasts of various desires (B). Why therefore art thou led away from virtue by the foolish enticements of those Vices (C), which charm thy senses, only that they may allure thee to drink of that foul lake (D) to which thou art wandering down by a dangerous and crooked way (E); and that when they have allured thee down, Pride (F), Luxury, and Avarice, may transform thee into a beast (G), and draw thee down into the gulph of Hell (H). Behold the kingdom of God (I) is within thee, why shouldst thou be seeking for it elsewhere in vain? Behold the greatest joys are those which are in the heart of Virtue (K); such some Saints (L) have tasted even in this life. Those joys which are from God, Who is the Fountain of all good things, overflow the heart (M), and satisfy it; but those delights (N) which are drawn from the lake of sin, flow through it, perish, and are no more.

On the true Joy

SPRINGING FROM VIRTUE, OR THE EIGHTH REMEDY FOR INCREASING MEDITATION AND ITS FRUITS.

FOR the place of Meditation consider the scene represented by the Image, and use the Prayer annexed.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER that the Lord of His loving-kindness hath so ordered it, that men should from motives of pleasure be led on to labour ; and if bodily pleasure hath this power, much more hath spiritual pleasure, Joy arising from virtue. i. e. that which floweth from virtue. If therefore thou art drawn away from virtue by pleasure (for when any one is tempted and drawn away, it is by the allurements and enticements of some pleasure) see how much greater and better is that holy and true pleasure which springs from virtue, than that which arises from the perishable delights

of this world. In the first place, because this last is foul and base the pleasure of sin. base, and false pleasure. So that Aristotle should say, that the gross and ignoble delights of the body are not true delights, because they are not found to be delights excepting to those who are evil disposed and corrupted ; just, he says, as children highly prize their own playthings, which men despise. So foul indeed are they, that of old time the philosophers and poets feigned that men were changed into brute beasts and monsters, who were captured by the loves of Circe. And surely not unsuitably. For do we not see the proud man walking about like the peacock ? and the luxurious man to be wanton like the goat ? the glutton like the hog, hurried on for his belly's sake and food ? nor is there any one of decent character, who does not hide affections of this nature by reason of modesty. See then how base and vile these joys are in themselves. " Truly," saith Bernard, " the consolation of

the world is mean, and profitable for nothing, and what is more to be feared is a hindrance to true and healthful delight. Of what indeed is it that the glutton is thus madly greedy? for what is it that seas are crossed, souls perish, the heavenly inheritance is lost, like Esau's birthright, and even sacred persons sacrifice their calling? It is but for a mess of pottage, for one or two mouthfuls, sweeter than usual, and the more precious because the more scarce^a. In the second place, see with how much trouble, by how long and difficult a way, such an object is sought, that to them Gregory truly applies those words of Job, They who rejoice in things of this kind, seek delights as it were ^{Bitter is the pleasure of this world.} under thorns^b. For neither, saith he, are they able without heavy and troublesome anxieties to seek for those temporal things which they desire, while they have them not, nor when attained to preserve them: such as among equals to attain glory more excellent than others; always to be doing evil things; and yet to be in fear and on the watch lest they should be supposed to be so doing. They are like those Hebrews who had no taste for the manna, because of the flesh-pots, and garlick, and leeks of Egypt. For what is signified by those flesh-pots, but the works of the flesh, and sorrows and troubles are the fires by which they are dressed? what by the pumpkins, but the sweet things of earth? what by the leeks and onions, which are apt to bring tears into the eyes of those who eat them, but the difficulties of this present life, such as it is found to be by those who love it, not without grief, and yet together with its tears it is loved? In the third place, observe that the goods of this kind are not so much goods as lesser evils: and in these man is doing nothing more than simply changing the heavier fetters for lighter. Does hunger oppress thee? it is pleasant to eat; but if thou art fully satisfied it is more disagreeable to eat than to be without. So there is no simple or pure delight but it is mixed up with many bitter-nesses. In fine, the condition of sensual delights is such, that when they are possessed they are loathed, but when they are not possessed the desire of them is a torment: but in spiritual delights the desire is pleasant, and the experience of them more so. Therefore reason thou thus: If longing for earthly things doth occasion distress, much more does the possession of them; and forthwith turn away from them and loathe them. For who would be able to thrust out an enemy when near to him, and existing within his walls, if even when he is afar off he is shaken from head to foot by the fear of him? In the fourth place, observe that on this account man cannot really be re-freshed with earthly things, because they are not suitable to his nature: just as we see that some kinds of good are more

Man cannot be truly re-freshed by earthly things.

^a "Eo carior quo rarior." Lat.

^b Job xxx. 7. Lat. Vers. Greg. Moral. xx. 24.

grateful to men, and others to beasts. Since therefore these lowest pleasures delight man so far only as he is partaker with brute beasts, and hath a body and feeling, it follows that there is for him his own proper delight, which is according to reason, far more noble and much greater.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that the delights of the spirit and of virtue are far greater than those of the body: in the first place, because the spiritual good and spiritual object is better and nobler: on which account we should prefer to be without an eye to being without reason. In the second place, the union with the objects desired is greater, because the senses depend on accidentals, not on essentials, and bodily delights are ever passing, whereas those of the mind are entire at one time, as the objects themselves are which we entertain. In the third place, because spiritual goods remain, others perish. But consider earnestly what is the chief object of spiritual joy, it is God;—what wonder then if the embracing of that object whereby we are joined to Him the very highest Good, should itself be most pleasant and most sweet? And this takes place when the soul is joined to God by true virtue, and especially by love and contemplation: in the which even Aristotle and the philosophers of old considered all blessedness to consist.

Observe now what exceeding joys the Saints have received from this their happiness, so that they were unable to bear the greatness of them. As we have heard of certain holy men, when they exclaimed,

Why the soul
hath joy in
God.

It is enough, O Lord, it is enough! and the reason why that blessedness which is in God is the only true, and the highest delight of which man is capable, is this, because God is his end: and whatsoever attaineth its end, attaineth its own proper blessedness. In the first place, because He alone satisfieth the soul, all other things can by no means do so; no more than if any one were to feed himself on smoke or air. They shall eat, saith Hosea, speaking of the wicked, and not have enough. As righteousness, saith Jerome, satisfieth, so iniquity having no substance, deludeth and deceiveth those who feed on vanities, and leaveth empty the stomachs of those who eat it. But Isaiah compareth worldly men to dreamers, who imagine themselves to be eating, but they awake and their soul is empty^c. Oh what misery to be bound to draw water with a cask full of holes, all in vain: to catch at empty air, all in vain! Such is the madness of the worldly man, saith Bernard, as if a hungry man were to puff out his cheeks to draw in the

^c Isaiah xxix. 8.

air, or to receive the smoke of brimstone, and hope to be satisfied therewith. But the Wise man saith, He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver: nor he that loveth abundance with increase^d: and this is common to all vices. Lo! Solomon denied not to his eyes any thing that they desired, yet did he see that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. On the other hand, they who hunger and thirst after righteousness both here and hereafter shall be filled. In the third place, for man to be well and happy, it is necessary that the means whereby this happiness comes to him should be better than himself, and such as cannot be taken away from him without his consent: and virtue only can be such, and God, to Whom we are united by means of virtue. Oh how great is the vicissitude and inconstancy of all things in this world! But virtue and her riches are everlasting and inviolable, by the grace of God, and our working together with Him.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER that every man is as it were athirst, and that the worldly man by circuitous means, long and toilsome, is endeavouring to satisfy this thirst: but like the dropsical man he is thereby increasing it; and is drawing from a sulphureous or salt lake whither his lust inviteth him: but that the righteous man hath God every where present with him, the fountain of all good: as the Lord complaineth by Jeremiah, They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water^e. But my soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God:—when shall I come, and Thou wilt fill me with joy with Thy countenance? In the second place, consider that it is most certain, that if with God's grace thou bestowest half as much labour and trouble for the sake of true virtue, which is now sustained for the sake of the world, thou wilt indeed be truly blessed now and for ever.

Difference
between the
good and
bad.

A Short Prayer.

O my God, my Joy, I believe in Thee and hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee, for all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto Thee? Thou dost exhort me by Thy Psalmist, saying, Come before His presence with a song: be ye sure that

^d Eccles. v. 10.^e Jer. ii. 13.

the Lord He is God. I am sure of it through Thy grace, and I hear, Delight thou in the Lord and He shall give thee thy heart's desire. Therefore Thou dost call me to Thee, so that I may truly rejoice in Thee, and despise the consolations of the creature; and Thou dost promise me to grant my petitions. What are they? One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, that I may love Thee, and that nothing may separate me from Thee for ever. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God, when shall I come to appear before the presence of God? Tell me, O Thou Whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions? I have vowed a vow unto Thee, I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to take any rest, until I find out a place for Thee, Lord Jesus, and Thou shalt rest in the tabernacle of my heart. In this desert land, with no way and where there is no water, I whom Thou knowest, unhappy man that I am, yet am happy in this, that I stand before Thee this day, and come to Thee, that I may taste how sweet Thou art to my soul, that I may see Thy power and glory. I beseech Thee, by Thy great love, that Thou wilt not despise me a stranger and an exile, the wandering sheep: hide not Thou Thy face from me; Thou hatest nothing that Thou hast made: far less any of those things which Thou hast thus made again. For what is my hope? Art not Thou, my Lord, my Saviour? What is and what shall be my consolation for ever? Is it not Thou, the God of all comfort?

God forbid that I, Thy most unworthy son, should wish aught upon earth apart from Thee, or beyond Thee; that I should walk through difficult and crooked paths, or be delighted and rejoice in the consolation of the creature, which is but as a snare, and so that grief should seize the end of my joy. And what is that grief? Would that it may be such, that I may grieve that I have forsaken Thee the Fountain of living waters; that I may grieve most deeply from love of Thee:—I pray Thee hide not Thou Thy face from me. For what is my hope? Art not Thou, O Lord? No more will I walk through difficult and crooked ways. For where are those delights for the sake of which we have wearied ourselves? Are they not foul, base, mean, and for which we blush when they are passed? Truly,

truly it is a bitter thing, it is bitter to leave Thee, O most sweet Jesus. Thou art ineffable sweetness, Thou art all desirable. Alas ! woe is me, If I leave Thee, most sweet Jesus. O the madness of the children of Adam ! Why, I pray you, seek you cisterns which can hold no water ? Seek ye the Fountain of living water, and drink, and be ye fully satisfied with the breast of His consolations.

Behold, O Lord, behold, O Jesu, my affliction ; for although Thou be present here with me and with all, Thou ocean of all good, yet alas, we fly Thee when Thou followest us, and we seek filthy ditches, like the waters of Sodom and the Dead Sea, which satisfieth not thirst, but enflameth it the more. For that only is true joy, which is taken from Thee, my God. Of what sort is that joy ? He knoweth who knoweth Thee, who hath tasted and seen how gracious Thou art, Lord, unto them that love Thee. What seekest thou, O my soul ? delight thou in the Lord, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire ? Seek thine own good. One thing is good for one creature, another for another, and all creatures have some good peculiar to themselves ; the good of cattle is to fill the belly, to be free from want, to sleep, to sport, to live, to be well, to beget their kind. Is it good of this kind which thou seekest, who art a joint-heir with Christ ? Why dost thou rejoice ? because thou art the companion of cattle ? raise up thy hope to the Good of all good things. For Thou, my God, art all Good : Thou alone canst satisfy the mind : Thou art the only joy which is most enduring with constant pleasantness ; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore ! This it is which I love, when I love Thee, my God, I love all good, and perfect, and lasting, and pure. All other delights are short lived, whether from honour or from pleasure : all things are vain, and fleeting, and uncertain. For who can boast of the favour of the world, which passeth away in a moment ? It is ever uncertain, and speaketh smoothly, like Joab, when it slayeth secretly : it floweth in softly, but at the end it biteth like an adder.

Of what nature is joy in God.

The children of this world experience the goadings of imagination and the gnawings of conscience, by which all that little sweetness becomes hidden or rather lost and quenched, whatever can be sweet apart from Thee, O highest Sweetness, our Happiness and Joy beyond all joy. Better is one day in Thy courts than a thousand : better are the crumbs which fall from Thy table, my Lord, than the delights of all the world. And while in Thee we possess all things, for the sake of what, I pray, should we leave Thee ? In the sun I admire brightness, in the flowers beauty, taste in bread, in earth fertility ; but from Thee, O God, are all these things ; and doubtless Thou hast reserved for Thyself far more than, O my Creator, Thou hast given to Thy creatures. Yet perchance it would be wearisome to sigh after Thee, if the way to Thee and to Thy joy were long and through a desert ; but lo, if

I will, I can even now be Thy friend, and rejoice before Thee, and in a contented mind may prepare a continual feast for Thee, and be crowned with glory and honour. Behold with your eyes, saith Thy holy Preacher, how that I have had but little labour, and have gotten unto me much rest^f. Draw near unto Wisdom, and bear her good fruits; in her work thou shalt labour a little time, and quickly shalt thou eat of that which is born of her. Therefore I desire henceforth, from this moment, earnestly to follow Thee, Lord Jesus, and to embrace this virtue (here purpose some virtue). For if I do so, then lo, my heart and my flesh shall rejoice in the living God; but if I do not, then trouble and heaviness await me. Whom have I then in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. Thou art my Hope and my portion in the land of the living. Amen.

RULES FOR OBTAINING THE JOY WHICH SPRINGS FROM VIRTUE.

FIRST, when any one perceiveth himself to be enticed by pleasure, to suspend his inclination, and restrain his longing, because that which he seeketh or hopeth to obtain through sin, by praying and overcoming himself, he can obtain far more nobly and more profitably.

Suspend the mind in temptation.

Secondly, as often as pleasure inviteth, to think, as a certain one adviseth, that thou hast already enjoyed it; for it matters not whether that enjoyment hath been in reality, or in opinion only; since nothing can remain after it, save the grief for having had that pleasure, which thou canst seek in the Lord, and draw from the wells of the Saviour.

How pleasure is to be repelled.

Thirdly, to practise mortification and self-denial in both great and small circumstances; for this wonderfully conduceth to this end; nor will this be difficult, if one is well assured that instead of this consolation of the creature which thou hast lost, there is prepared for thee that which is eternal: yea even a divine consolation now in this life. For as often as any one relinquisheth any thing on account of the love of God, and sheweth himself liberal towards the divine Majesty, so often will he in return experience that Majesty liberal towards himself. For wickedness surpasseth not wisdom, nor our need Him Who is liberality itself. Yea, verily, there is no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for the sake of the Lord's Name, but he shall receive an hundredfold—and in the world to come eternal life. But when, dost thou ask, shall he receive that hundredfold? The Lord answereth, He shall receive a hundredfold now in this present time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.

Mortification both necessary and sweet.

To him that mortifieth himself an hundredfold is given.

^f Eccclus. li. 27.

And this it is which the Bridegroom insinuateth in the Canticles, "I am come into my garden," that is, the soul; "I have gathered my myrrh," because He hath stirred up to mortification; "I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milk; eat, O friends: drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." For soon after mortification he had the honey-comb of the soul, and drinketh the "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." He visiteth the soul, even this our earth, and blesseth it; He maketh it very plenteous; He poureth abundantly upon it the rain of His graces, and blesseth the increase of it.

Exhortations.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to visit His temple." Psalm xxvii. 4.

"I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Psalm xxvii. 15.

"They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house, and Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures, as out of a river." Psalm xxxvi. 8.

"For with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light." Psalm xxxvi. 9.

"The Lord hath granted His loving-kindness in the day-time; and in the night season did I sing of Him, and made my prayer unto the God of my life." Psalm xlii. 8.

IMAGE THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

EXAMINE AND IMITATE THE EXAMPLE OF ANY PARTICULAR VIRTUE,
AS IT IS SHEWEN THEE IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD.

Observe, O Christian, what illustrious examples of faith and holiness the good Spirit and Christ, thy Lord, hath set before thee in the sacred Scriptures (A). In order that Virtue (B) and her ways may not be an offence unto thee, behold how thy Lord hath gone before thee in all instances of goodness (C). Imitate then and copy Him (D), and endeavour to follow Him. "See," saith He, "that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Look to Christ as set before thee on the mount of His Passion (E). Hear Him also teaching on the mount of the Beatitudes (F). Behold, and consider that virtue (G) which He there pointeth out, and hear also God the Father, from Heaven (H) on that other mount of His Transfiguration, commanding us to hear His Son. Finally, flee from Sin (I), which would turn thee away from following Christ, lead thee from the difficult road of the Cross, which is the only way of virtue, and tempt thee to thine own destruction. For every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Thus shrinking from that rough dealing with ourselves which virtue requires, or from a love of some momentary pleasure which is found in sin, he falls away from the path of Salvation.





On the Imitation of Christ,

OR THE NINTH MEANS OF INCREASING MEDITATION AND ITS FRUITS.

For the place of thy Meditation take such a scene as the Image represents. And use the prayer annexed.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER first, that God the Father is addressing thee in these words, Behold, thou worm of the earth, behold, O man, thou vapour, appearing for a little time*, so did I, thy God, love the world Importance of Christ's example. and thee that I gave Mine Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. And are these things true? Be astonished, O wretched man, and observe diligently with how great love the Divine Goodness hath given thee such a prototype, infinitely more perfect than all Saints. Behold with what colours He hath vouchsafed to pourtray It. For there is in Him the brightness of the eternal Light, and the mirror of virgin Chastity, and the express Image of the Father's Substance, a portrait set forth in red and crimson, with the precious Blood of the Lamb without blemish. And consider, I pray thee, whether, since He hath given such an example prepared for thee at such a cost, sent down from Heaven, it is becoming for such to be contemned and despised by thee.

Imagine ye God the Father to be setting the Child Jesus in the midst of us, and saying, Except ye become as this little Child ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Behold how with His eye, with His hand, He inviteth thee to follow and to embrace Him; therefore cling closely unto Him and embrace Him, Who though He was so very great, yet for thy sake became a little child, and was made lower than

* James iv. 14.

the Angels. In the second place, observe, that as to see God in Heaven is the highest blessedness, so here to know Jesus Christ, and to imitate Him, is the highest dignity and happiness. In the third place, how sad is it, so to speak, for Christ the Lord Himself to have set Himself as thine example on the Cross, with sufferings so great in order that He might make thee blessed, that He might conform thee, and especially such a one as is desiring to become spiritual, unto Himself, and yet that this very thing should be set at naught by thee. In the fourth place, that the Lord, out of His boundless love hath come down from Heaven, to shew the way to us; or even as it were to thee only, and as to none other but thee—for He is Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life,—to bring thee back His sheep gone astray. And alas! O most gracious Jesu, how often dost Thou hold out Thy hand, and there is no man that regardeth it: Thou callest and we refuse. Oh how justly dost Thou complain by Thy Prophet, All the day long I have stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people^b. How sad is it to Thine Infinite Goodness, to hear from the children whom Thou hast purchased at the great price of Thy Blood, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways^c.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER in what it most especially behoveth thee to imitate the Lord Jesus: and observe, first, that the three powers of thy soul which are very much depraved through original sin, must be framed anew. Reflect therefore, how holy the thoughts which He must have had in His memory—how pure must have been His understanding from all error and falseness; how His will, free, and foreign to all earthly affection, and filled with the infinite love of God His Father. Stir up then in thyself these the three powers of thy soul, and labour hard to heal their wounds by the example of Christ. In the second place, consider in what manner Jesus Himself must have bridled those affections which are occupied about the good things of the world, the honourable, the useful, the pleasant; and which struggle together in our souls, like Esau and Jacob in their mother's womb; and how the appetitive part of our nature He must have transformed to the desire of the better goods; and the irascible part He must have turned against the evils of our souls. Enter thou therefore into the heart of the most loving Jesus, as it is free, first from all disturbance of passion; secondly, from all sinister and oblique intention; thirdly, from all worldly delights; fourthly, from the desire of pleasing men; fifthly, from all unprofitable

What must
have been
the heart of
Jesus.

^b Isaiah lxxv. 1; Rom. x. 21.

^c Job xxi. 14.

thoughts; sixthly, from superfluous carefulness; seventhly, from injurious bitterness; eighthly, from empty self-complacency; ninthly, from all affection for created comfort; tenthly, from anxiety; in the eleventh place, from impatience; twelfthly, from all will of its own, for He preferred to lose His life rather than His obedience; and so commended this obedience that He promised to it an hundredfold, and hath decreed that whosoever doth not give up all that he hath, cannot be His disciple. Observe, at the same time, the virtues of poverty, of meekness, of holy grief; what hunger after righteousness there was in Christ, what mercy, purity of heart, love of peace, patience, zeal, and humility; and what St. Leo said of this, may be applied to all the other virtues, that it is not to be despised by any rich man, nor what any noble need blush at, for human happiness cannot be raised to so lofty an eminence, as to think it need be ashamed of that which God, in the form of a servant, thought not unworthy of Himself.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER the conversation of eternal Wisdom, in every action most sweet, most provident: as the Wise man saith, "her conversation hath no bitterness^d;" but in all things she hath left heroic examples of obedience, of charity, of pure intention, of devotion. What must have been the conversation of Jesus. Thou therefore in like manner never turn aside from the Divine will, neither in the work thou doest, nor in the manner of doing it; but in adversity and in prosperity, with equable mind ever look to Him, for the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of men, and considering the most secret parts^e. Do not allow examples so illustrious to be set before thee to no purpose. For He hath given us an example, that as He hath done so should we do^f. And he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked^g. Consider, moreover, that not only the Lord Christ is to be imitated by thee, but our Heavenly Father also: for so have we His command, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which God must be imitated. is in Heaven is perfect. Wherefore consider that the mysteries and the virtues of human nature are as it were the door whereby thou mayst enter in unto the powers of the Lord, and to contemplation of His perfections. I am the door, saith the Lord; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. Therefore consider the perfections of God also in thine actions, His long-suffering, for example, prudence, wisdom, liberality, and goodness; and determine

^d Wisdom viii. 16.^f John xiii. 15.^e Eccclus. xxiii. 19.^g 1 John ii. 6.

in thyself that they are to be imitated by thee, and make use of the grace of God, and in thy heart depict the Prototype, or Great Exemplar, Christ Jesus. Certainly it is as St. Gregory, the brother of St. Basil, elegantly says, Each man is the painter of his own life: the will is the artificer of this work; the colours are the virtues; and Christ should be the pattern.

A Short Prayer.

O Mirror without spot, Christ Jesus, I believe in Thee, and I hope in Thee, and with my whole heart I love Thee; I see Thee, O King of kings, the good Shepherd, the best of Masters, and I hear Thy most sweet voice, Come and follow Me in this point (here think of some object to be attained) and thou shalt inherit everlasting life. Do I believe, and yet not follow Thee? How can this be? To will is present with me, but how to perform I find not. Draw me therefore after Thee, and I will follow Thee the All Good, whithersoever Thou goest. For truly, truly, it is good for me to hold me fast by Thee, and to put my hope in Thee, O Lord Jesu. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

O Jesu most loving, most dear Fountain and Mirror of all perfection, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily^h, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledgeⁱ, of Thy fulness have all we received, and grace for grace^k. My soul gaspeth unto Thee as a thirsty land, not yet, not yet transformed unto Thee. Give Thou this grace to me, that I may be able to imitate Thee, to be in Thee, to live, to move always in Thee: and do Thou express in me the most perfect patterns of all virtues, according to Thine own Image. For mayst Thou not justly complain, if I, a slave wretched and pitiable, refuse to follow Thee? What, shall I be ashamed? but it is great glory to follow the Lord. Shall I be grieved? But the righteous man shall never be grieved, whatever happen to him: and there is always joy to the true in heart; for with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light. What then shall turn me aside from Thee and from Thy footsteps, footsteps which I see to be red with blood, and to shine with the flame of Thy love? I kiss them and rejoice: I perceive them to scatter odours, whereby I may be hurried

^h Col. ii. 9.

ⁱ Col. ii. 3.

^k John i. 16.

along into Thy love. Thou art the Pattern shewed to us in the mount^l. I desire, by Thy grace, to imitate Thee; I desire to consecrate to Thee the powers of my soul.

Henceforth, far from my memory be the tumult of worldly thoughts and empty things: I will adorn it with thoughts of the things of Heaven, and I will cast out from Thy temple, i. e. from my heart, these idols (here think of some temptations) of my former vanity. Oh would that forgetting these things which are behind, I could reach forward to those things that are before^m, that I could ever be thinking of Thee, from all things which supply thoughts to my senses, could enter into Thy powers. With what ease could I set at rest all the emotions of my mind, could I close up this door of memory, as I now determine altogether to do. For no sooner hath the enemy entered in thither, or a spark of pride, or anger, or luxury, hath been admitted therein, than all my soul is disturbed, and darkness is spread over my understanding, so that I can no longer behold Thee, the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, nor that reason, which Thou hast given me for a guide. Come, most blessed Light, come to day, and since Thou art so gracious, suffer me to drink of Thy cup and to eat bread in Thy kingdom; that that which is all good may satisfy me, and thine immeasurable charity may fill the innermost places of my heart; that I may know myself and know Thee, and that all things beside Thee are nothing; for I know, I know Thou only art, Who art, and sayest of Thyself, I AM; all other things are but shadows, and vanity of vanities.

Grant to me that those things which I know to be well-pleasing to Thee, what I know to be righteous, and good, and holy, that I, truly blind and ignorant as I am, may judge to be so indeed. For Thou art most wise, Thou most mighty, most excellent, most beautiful, most worthy to be loved by all, and loved alone. Thou art Light eternal, and eternal Wisdom: Thou scannest all things, as Thou hast made all things. How then should I refuse to trust in Thee, and to trust rather a deceitful world? Take away from me, I pray Thee, this blindness, error, and ignorance. Grant me to believe Thy Scriptures, Thy word, Thy holy doctors, my superiors. But since to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin, grant, I beseech Thee, that whatever I see to be good, it may be my delight to do the same: grant me a holy will, that I may will nought but Thee, or on Thy account; may it be my meat to do Thy will, to deny my own judgment; never, never to rest on my own wisdom; may it be my meat, as, most gracious Jesu, it was Thine, to do the will of Thy Fatherⁿ;—true meat indeed, and of all a thousand times the sweetest. For that will is the standard of all will that is good; whatsoever declines from that is not up-

^l Exod. xxv. 40.^m Phil. iii. 19.ⁿ John iv. 34.

The memory
to be cherish-
ed.

Exercise of
obedience.

right, is depraved and unjust. O would that it were mine to have one will with Thee, one judgment, not to think of knowing any thing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified: that I should be able to hope for nothing, to will nothing, but for Thy will to be done: that my will, when united to Thine, should be no more mine, but Thine: that it should be no longer the will of a man wretched and blind, but the will of my God, and like God: that it should be one with Thine, for then I know it will be upright, and holy, and perfect.

Grant me, my God, my fortitude, so to moderate the passions of love, hate, joy, sorrow, hope, and fear, that it may be my delight, O Thou fairest Spouse of the soul, to constrain Thee to abide with me, in the peace of my heart, both to-day and even unto the end of all things. O what great good hath he, who so restrains those affections, that they are in subjection unto himself and to Thee, and that for Thy sake he may have peace. But alas, hitherto, how often am I carried away, and compelled to serve those passions? But henceforth I detest and hate them; and I dedicate these affections to Thee, with all the desire of my heart, that they may serve Thee all the days of my life; that I may become a follower and an imitator of Thee, a creature of its Creator, a slave of its Lord, a disciple of the best of Masters, a son of the kindest of Fathers. Hear, O Lord, this my desire, that according to my calling I may shew forth Thy life, O mirror of all perfection; that in all my thoughts, words, and works, I may render my life like to Thine: that humbly, peaceably, fervently, I may labour according to Thy will. For as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can I, except by virtue I abide in Thee.

O I would, most humble Jesus, that all might know that I am Thy disciple, not only if I have charity, which is the bond of perfectness, but also humility, by hiding virtues, as Thou hidest Thy glory; by always seeking the lowest place, and not the first seats^o; for these, as also pride, I hate, as a menstruous cloth^p. I long to walk with Thee, most humble Jesu: I will not be proud, since Thou humblest Thyself, nor sit down when Thou art standing, my King and my God: nor live delicately while Thou, my Head, O Christ Jesu, art tortured: nor be honoured, when Thou hast chosen shame. I, Thou didst say, seek not Mine own glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth^a: so I desire, whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, to do all to Thy glory; to despise things present, which are perishable and transient; to seek after things heavenly and eternal: to resign myself unto Thee, and to accept all things by Thy grace, as coming from Thine Hand, which is worthy of all love. Amen.

^o Luke xiv.^p Isaiah xxx. 22.^a John viii. 50.

RULES FOR GUIDING TO THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

FIRST, in every doubtful case, when thou art hesitating what thou art to say or do, consider how Christ Jesus, the everlasting Wisdom, would say or do the same; and implore His Grace that thou mayst be able to imitate Him. Christ in all things the exemplar.

Secondly, sometimes in examination of thyself, take up the same thought, and reflect how in this or that matter the Lord Jesus would have conducted Himself, in what manner He would have spoken, what He would have done.

Thirdly, when thou wouldst in quiet and retirement order thy life and thine actions, imagine that Christ the Lord is present with thee, and compose and direct all thine actions according to His standard.

Fourthly, since we have received the heavenly commandment from God the Father, to hear and imitate Christ our Lord;—for this Voice from Heaven was heard of the Apostles on mount Tabor, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him;”—it is necessary therefore, that so far as it is possible, we should fulfil it. For on this account the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, that He might invite us by His example, How profitable to meditate on Christ's life. and that man might conform himself to Him. Wherefore, let him who would go on unto perfection, and enter into life, do what

St. Bernard professes that he himself did; let him enter into a course of meditation concerning the life and death of Christ our Lord, and out of that, and from all the troubles and bitterness of that His life, let him gather for himself as it were a bunch of myrrh, which he may place in his breast, i. e. may evermore look upon with his eyes. For although the materials for meditation may be manifold, yet this one is equivalent to all, this one is the door to all virtue and contemplation, which the Lord wished to intimate when He said, I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. On which, elegantly and sweetly saith Bernard, Jesus is honey in the mouth, a sweet song in the ear, in the heart a jubilee.

But He is medicine also. Is any one among us sad? let Jesus come into his heart, and from thence let Him spring forth into his mouth, and lo, at the rising of His Name there is light, every cloud disperses, serenity returns. Doth any one fall into crimes, and rush headlong in his desperation to self-destruction and death? If he call upon that Name of life, will not he immediately breathe again and live? With whom ever hath hardness of heart, or the torpor of sloth, or the languour of lukewarmness, stood at all before the face of that saving Name? Whose dried up fount of tears hath not burst out afresh in greater abundance, when Jesus hath been invoked? Nothing so restraineth the impetuosity of anger, so stilleth the swellings of pride, healeth the wound of envy, puts out the fire of lust, quenches the thirst of avarice, and stops the itching of all unseemliness: if so be, indeed, that I set Jesus altogether before me, as Man, meek and lowly in heart, kind, temperate, chaste, pitiful, conspicuous in short for all goodness and holiness; and the very Selfsame also as the Almighty God, Who How good and sweet the memory of Jesus.

How to think of Christ.

both may heal me by His example, and strengthen me by His support. All these sound in my ears, when the Name of Jesus is heard. From Man therefore, I take my example, from the Mighty One my help: the former as it were a kind of costly ointment, the latter the means whence I may sharpen the same, and make a confection, whose like no medicine-maker can compound. This thou hast, O my soul, as an electuary, stored up as in a vase in that word "Jesus." Nothing so healthful as this, and which will never be found inefficacious in any disease of thine. Ever therefore be it in thy bosom, ever in thine hand, whereby to Jesus all thy senses and thine actions may be directed. Set me, He saith, as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm^r. And thus speaketh a certain pious writer, The continual and devout meditation upon the adorable Passion of Christ, will separate the mind from the worldly and carnal desires of this life, will raise thy heart to spiritual and heavenly things, will indicate to thee with truth, what thou oughtest to think, what to speak, what to answer, or in what to keep silence, what thou oughtest to do, or in what manner it should be done.

Meditation
on the Pas-
sion most
profitable.

Exhortations.

HEARKEN TO THE LORD SPEAKING AS IT WERE TO THEE.

"Come, ye children, and hearken unto Me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Psalm xxxiv. 11.

"They had an eye unto Him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed." Psalm xxxiv. 5.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matt. xvi. 24.

"I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John xiii. 15.

^r Cant. viii. 6.

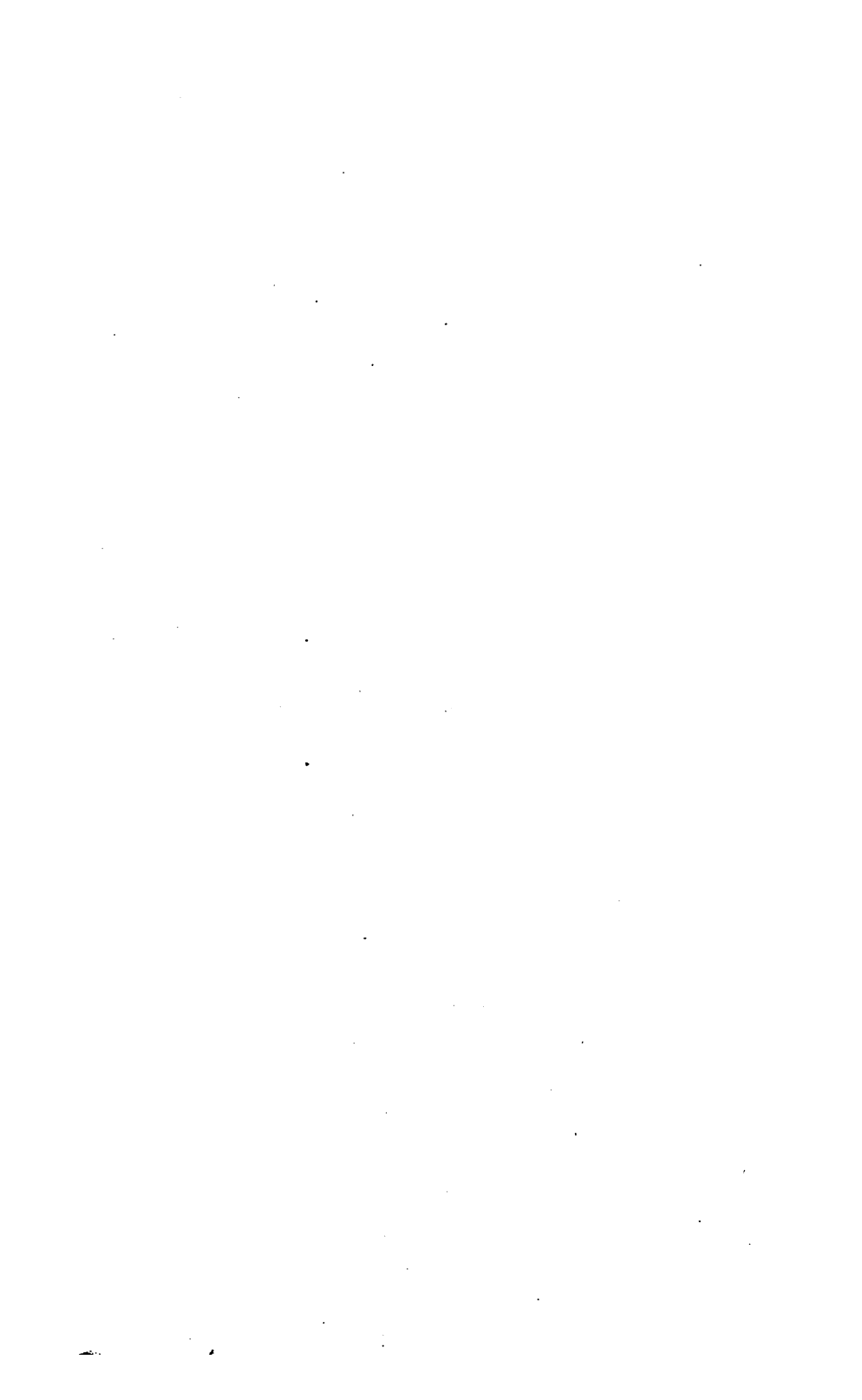




IMAGE THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

ATTEND TO THE BENEFITS WHICH GOD CONFERS UPON THEE,
BY WHICH THOU ART STIMULATED TO HOLINESS.

Consider the blessings with which God invites thee to Virtue; that of Creation (A), that of our Lord's Incarnation (B), that of Redemption (C), those of Sacraments and Graces (D). For it is God that feeds thee and clothes thee (E); delivers thee from many evils and miseries (F); and by His Angels sendeth His gifts (G), as He did of old upon the Israelites (H). It is God Who giveth thee showers (I), and sunshine (K), and increase of fruits for thy use and delight (L), and these He bestoweth upon thee in order that thou mayst follow Virtue (M). And since God doeth all these things out of His very great Charity (N), wilt thou not also in thy turn be melted with love? Surely although Virtue be of itself lovely, and vice detestable, yet independently of these considerations it were but reasonable that we should embrace Virtue from the love of God and our Lord, and on account of those blessings with which He hath prevented us.

On the Benefits

CONFERRED ON US BY GOD, WHEREBY HE INVITES US TO PERFECTION; OR THE TENTH MEANS OF INCREASING MEDITATION AND ITS FRUITS.

FOR the place of the Meditation take the scene pourtrayed in the Image. And use the prayer as before.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER that man hath been created by God from nothing, out of His own mere goodness, and that too in His own Image and likeness: and therefore that it behoveth him not to be like "a wild ass's colt^a," as belonging to no one, but subject to God; and if he would rightly discharge his duty, to be obedient not only to His commands, but also to the signs by which He may beckon to us, and the inspirations He may give. For for this purpose was he created by the Lord, to Whom he wholly belongs. Even inborn reason itself, saith Laurence Justinian, crieth aloud, that each man should be subject to Him, from Whom he hath his being. Shall then the axe boast itself against him that handleth it? Shall the saw exalt itself against him by whom it is used? How shall the rod be raised against him that raiseth it? Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou^b? or man, why dost Thou give us commands? why requirest Thou these things? Weigh well these words, and reflect on thy ingratitude.

Consider also the surpassing greatness and excellency of the Divine Majesty, especially if it be compared with us: and for that reason we must study to serve and please Him in every way; for naturally the inferior are subject to others that are more excellent. In the second place, weigh well the mystery and the benefit of the Incarnation and Redemp-

^a Job xi. 12.

^b Isaiah xlv. 9.



tion;—that we have been redeemed at a great cost, with the precious blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot, that we might shew forth His glory and bear Him about in our body. In the third place, that however great these things be, yet are they made far more evident, if we reflect that God hath chosen us from all eternity, ^{Election of God.} before the foundation of the world, that we should be His sons, and vessels made to honour; and for this end that He hath ordained means, and hath brought us as soon as born to the Baptismal Font, hath educated us in the Church, hath set us in the true Ark, ^{How many and how great His benefits.} hath given us Sacraments, that we should be a chosen people, that we should shew forth His praise. O most merciful God, what shall I render for Thy eternal goodness, I, who see myself called to Thy faith and grace, while countless numbers are born and die in heathenism and unbelief? Assuredly, O good Jesu, Thy commandments and Thy counsels to me cannot be grievous;—to embrace virtue, that is the beauty, the health, the grace, the riches, the glory of my soul; especially when Thou not only hast given such great things, but also hast promised far greater things; pointing out to us continually the Heavens, the Throne of Thy Kingdom, our reward, where we may be when hell is for ever thrust aside; because Thou dost choose rather to be loved than feared.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER how often thou mayst take to thyself those words of St. Paul to the Romans, We are justified freely by His grace. How often the Divine pity, with such long-suffering, hath waited for thee and thy repentance; and while thousands are perishing every hour, ^{The gift of conversion.} yet hath He spared thee, because thy soul was precious in His sight. In the second place, weigh with thyself these words: It pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me. And apply this statement to thine own case, and to that peculiar grace or gift which, like a root, is producing other instances of grace, or poureth forth other fountains. For when the Lord bestoweth any state of life, or office, He also giveth means of grace to fulfil the same, as is evident in Holy Orders, in Matrimony, and the like. If thou art engaged in a calling devoted to religion, accommodate thyself to it, and see how thou hast been called from out of the midst of an evil nation, and from a wicked world, unto the true Paradise, to a state of felicity on earth, to the Apostolic mode of life, to the most secure path of salvation. Truly may each person in such a state of life apply to himself those words of Mardocheus, "A little fountain became

a river, and there was light, and the sun, and much water^c." For no sooner, O Lord Jesus, did Thy Voice sound in mine ear, but therewith there came to me, together with it, all good things, and many streams of grace abounded unto me from the ocean of Thy mercies. In the third place, consider the many other particular benefits of nature which were given to thee; that thou wast born of good parents, hast obtained good teachers, companions, necessities of life; that He hath given so many creatures for thy refreshment and necessity. For all His creatures, if not immediately, yet mediately, are useful to us, and oftentimes necessary. Which St. Basil, in his third homily, excellently follows out; Out of nothing, saith he, hath He made us to be, and brought us forth: from the bowels of the earth hath He educed the elements, cattle of every kind hath He given to minister to us, for our sakes are the shower and the sun, the mountain country, and the well-cultivated plain; for us all rivers flow, and fountains break forth and glide along. What shall I now say, How great a benefit being preserved from evils. O most loving Father, if I consider how great and how many are the inconveniences and dangers which happen to others, and from which Thou hast deigned to preserve or to rescue me, a most vile and ungrateful sinner. But neither, perhaps, could I esteem all these things of so great value, did I not see that they have flowed from Thine infinite love from all eternity, and altogether from Thine own free bounty. O how shameful to be unwilling to render back love to Thee, our Lord and most sweet Benefactor, and, instead, to bestow it upon vile creatures, and by self-love to be turned away from the highest of all goods, and the acquisition of this virtue which I pursue.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER in the first place, that as Augustine saith, the worship of God consisteth chiefly in this, that the soul be not ungrateful to God;—
Gratitude how necessary. that ingratitude is most hateful to God, as indeed we see it to be even unto men, so that the Lord, touched as it were by inward grief of heart, saith by Isaiah, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. Seest thou not how He may complain in like manner of thee, if thou neglect those very many holy inspirations which have proceeded from His infinite love. When the ten lepers were cleansed and one only gave thanks, then said Jesus, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. Thou hast been cleansed by the Lord, beware lest ungratefully thou refuse to

^c Esther x. 6. (Apoc.)

follow His doctrine and example of virtue. In the second place, consider that, as St. Bernard saith, nothing so hinders our prayers from being heard, as ingratitude: What meaneth it, saith he, that He heareth not those, who are incessantly praying, beseeching, asking, to whom He hath extended mercy, so great and so free? And he answereth, It is not that what we instantly pray for is blameable, but, plainly, the petition is not granted because we are found ungrateful. And the same writer, in his Sermon on the Canticles, says, Ingratitude is the enemy of the soul, the emptying out of all deservings, the scattering away of all virtues, losing of all benefits: ingratitude is a burning wind that drieth up the very fount of goodness, the dew of mercy, the stream of grace. See then, since the Lord confers on thee benefits so great, and this with no other end but that thou mayst love Him, and by good deeds honour and worship Him, in what way oughtest thou to labour for Him, and to make returns to His Infinite Majesty, so lovingly, and with such sweetness asking from thee, that thou wouldst follow Him and love Him. In the third place, consider what gratitude requireth of thee, first, not merely to say, Lord, Lord, but to do His will. For what acceptable thanks can there be, if the Eternal Goodness be honoured with our life, but dishonoured by our deeds? Secondly, that truly out of thine own free will thou determine to serve the Divine Goodness, so as to be able to say, I will freely sacrifice unto Thee; I will praise Thy Name, O Lord; for it is good. For He hath delivered me out of all my trouble. Thirdly, that thou surrender thyself with all thy heart to all the labours and afflictions which the Lord shall send thee: and that thy mind resign itself to be deprived of the same benefits, if that shall seem good in His sight. For if we have received so many good things from the hand of God, why should we not also receive evil? In all things therefore let us give thanks and offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay our vows unto the most Highest: for He saith, Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me, and to him that ordereth his conversation right, will I shew the salvation of God. For by this gratitude the Lord is most strongly implored to open His mysteries, Who is blessed for evermore.

Ingratitude
rendereth
prayer in-
effectual.

A Short Prayer.

What reward can I give unto Thee, O my God, for all the benefits which Thou hast done unto me, heart, body, and soul? for I believe in Thee, and I hope in Thee, and truly with my whole heart I love Thee.

Behold, I will pay my vows to Thee, my Lord, in the presence of all Thy people, and I trust that Thou, Who hast given me the beginnings of these desires, wilt give me also to bring the same to good effect. Thy very many kindnesses assure me of this, Thy Body and Thy Blood are pledges to me, and more than all, Thy love is an assurance to me, that Thou wilt not fail me, nor forsake me. Let the people praise Thee, O God, yea let all the people praise Thee. Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, that I may sing of Thy glory and honour all the day long: and that men also may see my good works, and glorify Thee, my Father, Which art in Heaven.

A Longer Prayer.

My soul doth magnify Thee, O Lord my God, because Thou hast deigned, from the lofty throne of Thy glory, to look down upon me. Who am I, Lord, that Thou shouldst be mindful of me, and what is my father's house? Thou knowest, and Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and yet thus far I hope that Thou hast not turned Thine eyes away from me,

Application
to Commu-
nion.

Thine evil servant, a prodigal and wandering sheep; yea daily Thou dost feed me with Thyself, and dost nourish me with Thy Blood; and canst Thou be forgetful of me, or I of Thee? I will magnify Thee, O God my King, and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever: every day will I give thanks unto Thee, and praise Thy Name for ever and ever! O come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul: He set me up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was made; and seeing me in that unhappy lot, common to all the sons of Adam, in danger of damnation from original corruption, out of thousands, and an almost infinite number, hath He chosen me before the foundation of the world: and before I was in being, from everlasting, hath He loved me: and when now I had begun to be, and to behold this light, He illumined me with the true Light, and the Sun of Righteousness arose upon me: while many others are hurried away by a premature death, me hath He brought to the grace of Baptism, to faith, and the bosom of His Church, and with the Flesh and Blood of His Son hath He nourished me. And yet, most gracious Father, Thou didst know from all eternity that at times I should offend Thee by my sins: how often I should insult Thee: which grieveth me exceedingly at the thoughts of Thy love. Thy love hath overcome my wickedness: that fire hath vanquished my coldness: Thy kindness hath surpassed all my sins. And what is there, O Father eternal, which shall be able to separate me from Thy love? How shall I

not cheerfully obey all Thy commandments, and do all Thy will, and follow this virtue, and the footsteps of Thy most beloved Son?

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities: Who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness. For except Thou, Lord, hadst holpen us and hadst preserved us every day, my soul had well-nigh been dwelling in hell; but Thy hands, which made me and fashioned me, they made me strong, and delivered me from mine enemies, and filled me with all blessing. For all the created things which I behold are Thy gifts, wherewith Thou dost invite me to serve Thee; for these things are not for Thy sake, as though Thou needest them, neither are they for their own sakes, but that they may serve Thine elect, and Thine elect might serve Thee. Nor ought I to value these things the less, because they are common to others also; yea, this itself is to me the chiefest benefit, and for that do I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord,—for all the benefits conferred by Thee on any man; and on that account the more, the less they themselves acknowledge them and bless Thee for them.

First, then, do I give thanks to Thee, for that to our Head, Christ Jesus, to His humanity, Thou hast given the Divine Word to be joined, and a beautiful crown, that He should be King of kings and Lord of lords. For all the gifts also and graces bestowed on Him, of Whose fulness have all we received. So also I give Thee thanks for all the benefits which, with Thy freely-giving hand, Thou hast conferred on the most pure Virgin, and that Thou hast chosen her, one from among ourselves, to be mother of Thy Son. For Thy faithful Angels too I thank Thee, who by Thy grace have kept their first estate: for the Saints, who have persevered unto the end for Thy sake, and triumphed over themselves and the world: lastly, for all righteous men, and for the wicked, whom Thou hast prevented with Thy great grace, and dost vouchsafe daily to prevent. For Thou art worthy, O Lord God, that heaven and earth should praise Thee, the sea and all that moveth therein, and that all things should declare Thy glory. I would, indeed, that I might so live, that Thou shouldst not at any time repent of Thy bounty to me, nor be angry because of my evil covetousness, nor hide Thy face away from me. But I hope that Thou canst not, for I have a pledge of Thy love, Thy Body and Blood, and I know that them that love Thee Thou dost love: and I, as I hope, do indeed love Thee, at least with all my heart I wish to do so. And if Thou hearest the desire of the poor, and doest the will of them that fear Thee, most humbly do I trust that Thou wilt not cast me away from Thy presence, nor despise me for ever. But Thou wilt surely come, and wilt not tarry, and Thy reward is with Thee: that is, Thou wilt give Thy-

Thanksgiving for other benefits.

Application to Communion.

self to me, that I may give myself to Thee. O what manner of exchange is this? O how great is Thy condescension! O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

Remember, Lord, that this vine, my soul, Thou hast brought out of Egypt, and from an Egyptian darkness. Thou hast cast out

Thanksgiving for being called.

many nations and planted it, Thou hast gone before her as the Guide of her pilgrimage; Thou hast placed her on Thy holy hill, Thy Church; guided her to this her calling: Suffer it not, I beseech Thee, through Thy boundless charity, that when Thou from all eternity hast looked that it should bring forth grapes, it should bring forth wild grapes for Thee. Lest Thou shouldst say that of me which Thou didst say of Thy chosen people of old,—I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed, how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me? Let that anger of Thine, I beseech Thee, be turned away from me, that Thou mayst never leave Thy vineyard deserted, that briars and thorns should grow up therein; but that my soul may be as a watered garden, bearing virtues in abundance, like a tree planted by the water side, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season. Lest when Thou comest and findest no fruit of true virtue thereon, Thou shouldst curse me, as Thou didst that fig-tree, and no one from henceforward shall see fruit thereon for ever. Bless then, O Lord, the work of Thy hands, which is my soul, that it may at all times bless Thee, now indeed with true virtue and piety, and for ever in praises, and hymns, and songs, and most burning charity. Amen, Amen.

RULES FOR THANKSGIVING.

FIRST, often throughout the day, but particularly on a Holy-day, and in self-examination, give thanks to God for all things.

Secondly, call to mind on certain Festivals throughout the year the chief blessing thou hast received, as we see done on public occasions. And thus hold in solemn commemoration the day of thy birth, or some day very near it, in remembrance of the grace of thy Baptism, or if possible, the day of thy Baptism itself; and observe it by confession, Communion, alms-deeds, and such like exercises of piety.

Thirdly, this is also a useful rule, and that most especially on Sundays, on the Lord's Day. each of the hours of the day to recal to memory some blessing received, and praise God for it: and so here on earth to begin the life of Heaven.

Fourthly; it behoveth us to be grateful not for great blessings only, but

also for the very least: whence a certain devout Saint, whensoever he felt a divine suggestion, would stand still a while even in the midst of the streets, and give thanks. And then this very thing itself accept as a singular grace, that thou art able to give thanks to God.

Weigh the very smallest benefits.

Fifthly, observe that all things which occur to us, from whatever source, are to be attributed to God, and to be borne as thus received; that so love and charity may be especially directed towards God, Who is the Author of all good: and consider this to apply not only to good things, but also to adversities. The surgeon is not of less benefit when he uses the knife, than when he assuages pain: when he burns, than when he cools. What better thing therefore can we bear in the mind, or speak with the mouth, or write with the pen, than thanksgivings to our God? Nothing can be said more briefly, nor heard more gladly, nor understood more largely, nor done more profitably than this.

Attribute all things to God.

Ejaculations.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His Holy Name." Psalm ciii. 1.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Ps. ciii. 2.

"What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?" Psalm cxvi. 11.

"O come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God; and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul." Psalm lxvi. 14.

"My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord; with my mouth will I ever be shewing Thy truth, from one generation to another." Ps. lxxxix. 1.

IMAGE THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

CONSIDER THAT GOD IS STANDING ON ONE SIDE, AND SATAN ON THE OTHER: AND THINK WHETHER IT IS BETTER TO SERVE GOD THROUGH VIRTUE, OR THE DEVIL THROUGH VICE.

Whom therefore wilt thou serve, the mighty God (A), or the Devil (B)? Virtue inviteth thee to serve God (C), but Vice enticeth thee away, to return to the service of the Devil (D), which thou hast renounced. Consider what thou art doing; for who is God? He is Three and yet One (E); the Fountain of all good (F); Eternal (G); Almighty (H); infinitely Wise (I); most Bountiful (K); Alone satisfying the heart (L); filling all things (M), and every where present; most Just (N); the most Mighty King (O). Come therefore unto Him; offer unto Him all thou hast; give up thy heart (P) unto Him, as the Bride (Q) burning with love; deliver it unto Him through Faith, Hope, and Charity (R). As far as thou canst, draw all men unto the love of Him (S), being thyself inflamed with zeal for His honour, and doing all things unto His glory.





On the Perfections of God,

BY WHICH WE ARE RIGHTLY CALLED FORTH TO BE SERVANTS TO HIM
THROUGH VIRTUE; OR THE ELEVENTH MEANS OF INCREASING MEDI-
TATION AND ITS FRUITS.

FOR the place of thy Meditation take the foregoing Image. And use
the prayer annexed.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, O Christian soul, who art called to embrace virtue and
perfection, that of necessity thou must serve either God by
virtue, or the devil by vice: and this consideration thou mayst ^{We must} serve God or
attend to in all particular actions, thoughts, words, desires, and ^{the devil.}
the like. Tell me which wouldst thou choose to obey. For no man can
serve two masters, God and Mammon. The same place holdeth not the
Ark and Dagon. Christ hath no concord with Belial, neither hath
righteousness fellowship with unrighteousness, and no communion hath
light with darkness. But which is best?

Consider, in the second place, what the devil is, whom every sinner
serveth: the most implacable and cruel enemy of God and of thyself,
who by the allurements of the world inviteth thee to eternal flames, into
which he hath cast headlong numberless souls, even kings, and princes,
and all lovers of the world: a monster most dreadful, in whom there is no
piety, or justice, or bounty, but the sink of all vices and evils. And he
inviteth thee out of exceeding hatred and envy, whereby Lucifer, having
been himself deprived of Heaven, would in like manner shut us out from
everlasting joys: and would have us to be in the same condemnation
with himself. And for this end he contriveth every kind of deceit and
enticement, that he may allure on to vice, and most chiefly pride, and
ambition, and love of money. Dost thou suppose that the man who be-
lieves all this can be willing to serve him? In the third place, consider,

that the effect of sin is nothing else (as one might say) but this, to make one the slave of the devil: that of virtue to make one the servant of the great and good God. In the fourth place, think what it is to be through vice the devil's slave: that is, to be compelled to execute services the most vile and unworthy: at every hour and minute to be bound with the chain of a depraved will, the desire of some abject and worthless object, and to be led captive by it: for the covetous man is the slave of money, the luxurious man of pleasure, and so on.

SECOND POINT.

In the first place consider, and with a lively faith apprehend this, that there is a God in truth, both Good and Great, Whom all must serve: He only truly hath existence; before Him all things else are as nothing, and therefore, as He said unto Moses, "I Am hath sent me unto you^a." Consider that He the Same is a Spirit, most noble, most lovely, most pure, without component parts. One indeed in Substance, but Three in Person; and immortal. See, then, which it behoveth thee to serve; Him Who is, or that which is not, and a perishing world: to serve thine enemies or the immortal God. In the second place, consider Him as the source of all good and of all perfection, that He pre-eminently hath in Himself all things: whence a memorable Saint used to pray, "My God, my God, God of my heart, and all things." Think over, if thou wilt, the perfections of all creatures, and thence transfer thy love to God, the Fountain of all good things, in Whom all those perfections exist at one time, and out of Whom all have flowed, and daily flow; for He Himself hath made all things, and the whole world before Him is a little grain on the balance, yea, as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth^b. In the third place, He is eternal and unchangeable. From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God^c, said David: we are but for a moment, and never continue in one stay: but if we love His virtue and His commandments, He will make us with Himself to be eternal and blessed. Him therefore let us worship as our Lord, Who is ever the same, and Whose years shall not fail^d. In the fourth place, consider that He is All-mighty, Who with one word can create infinite worlds, and in like manner can annihilate them in the twinkling of an eye. Look upon this fabric of the material world, contemplate the seas and the skies: these He commanded to be, and they were: He comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,

^a Exodus iii. 14.^c Psalm xc. 2.^b Wisdom xi. 22.^d Heb. i. 12.

and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance*: He is the Fountain of wisdom Who from everlasting knoweth all things, their nature, their powers, their perfection, their motion, form, and order. With a most distinct and accurate knowledge He knoweth all things, in measure, and number, and weight^f, and every single thing by itself, all the very hairs of our heads. He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names. He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with a span. He seeth the day before it be risen, the risings and settings of all from everlasting, their merits and demerits, beholding all the ways of men. If all knowledge human and Angelic, be compared to Him, it is mere foolishness. Wilt thou dare then to accuse His works and say, Why hast Thou so commanded us, or why hath this thing so happened? There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord: it is He that frameth all things, He hath found out all things. He is Light illuminating all men: and revealing the deep things of the thoughts, and mysteries. But beyond all things, weigh thou well the love wherewith He loves all that He hath made, and hateth none of them. For in this love He delighteth Himself, He worketh all things for His own sake, and loveth all from everlasting, freely, beneficently: zealous for His own glory; but in peace He worketh; He is the Author of peace, and with tranquillity is His zeal and His judgment: long-suffering over the wickedness of men: giving a token for such as fear Him, that they may triumph because of the truth: merciful and pitiful, soon forgiving iniquity, as appeared at Nineveh^g: most bountiful even to His enemies^h, and to ungrateful men: immeasurable, "Whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot containⁱ:" and everywhere present; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being^k; and there is not any thing beyond Him that we may seek, for in Him we may have all things: a Judge most righteous, and most upright: a terrible avenger, yet full of pity; beneficent, condescending, brave, glorious, patient, kind, merciful, gentle, pleasing, sweet, holy, pure: Creator, Preserver, Governor; governing and guarding all things by His own providence. For truly is He Lord, and Lord of Hosts, and King of kings, and Lord of lords; great, immense, lofty, exalted, all worthy of love, and desire, and praise: incomparable. Such and so great is the Lord: and we slaves, creatures, and nothing. What then is there that holds us back? alas, what ready service is paid to the world in the most hard requirements which it imposes: and for Thee, my God, it is grievous

* Isaiah xl. 12.

^g Jonah iii. 10.ⁱ 1 Kings viii. 27.^f Wisdom xi. 20.^h Psalm lxxviii. 18.^k Acts xvii. 28.

to us, through true virtue, true humility, purity, resignation, to be blessed !
O the wickedness and the blindness of the sons of Adam !

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER how all the host of Heaven obey His nod : those Angelic Spirits and all Saints strive with deepest love to sing His honour and glory in everlasting songs, and are ravished with most burning zeal : and not these only, but even the winds and the sea and all things obey Him¹ ; and amongst all canst thou oppose His will ? Oh how right is it for thee with most pure intention,—that is, for that it pleases Him, and He wills it, and He is most worthy,—to follow virtue and piety, and to aim at perfection, rather than from hope of reward, or fear of punishment. For worthy is He to receive glory, and honour, and power^m, Who alone is Lord, alone the Most High. In the second place, picture to thyself on one side the devil, the world, and thine own will ; on the other the great and good God ; and observe at the same time that every creature hath been wholly created by Him for the glory of His Name : and how impious and unworthy it is with perverse will to turn them away from their proper end ; and for man to turn himself from the Creator unto them. In the third place, consider that the Lord is present in every creature, preserving them and working in them of His free and spontaneous love for thy sake ; and how base is it of thee to be as an hireling, —not out of sincere affection to serve Him, and with thy whole heart to love Him.

Rectitude of
intention
praiseworthy.

Benefit of
contempla-
tion.

God freely
giveth thee
all things.

A Short Prayer.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise. To Thee let my knee be bent, and the knee of all things in Heaven, and of all things in earth, and under the earth, and not to my direst foes. To Thee I bow the knee of my heart, and out of the deep do I call to Thee, O Lord, and with my whole heart I now do long to serve Thee. Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised ; there is no end of His greatness. One generation shall praise Thy works unto another, and declare Thy power : men shall speak of the might of Thy marvellous acts, and I will also tell of Thy greatness. The memorials of Thine abundant kind-

¹ Matt. viii. 27.

^m Rev. iv. 11.

ness shall be shewed, and men shall sing of Thy righteousness—and I too will be glad and rejoice in the Lord, and I will exult in Jesus my God; for I believe in Thee, and I hope in Thee, and with all my heart I love Thee. Amen.

A Longer Prayer.

O Lord our Governor, how excellent is Thy Name in all the world! Who is he among the clouds that shall be compared unto the Lord? And what is he among the gods that shall be like unto the Lord? For Thou art high above all heathen, and Thy glory above the heavens. All nations therefore whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy Name, the Name ineffable, which is above every name; and at Thy Name every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. For who is so great a God as our God, O my soul? He is Almighty over all His works, and there are yet hid greater things than these be, for we have seen but a few of His works. The Lord is terrible, and very great, and marvellous in His power^a. Let us glorify the Lord as much as ever we are able, His magnificence will still surpass our thoughts and be wonderful. Praise of
God.

When we praise the Lord, exalt we Him as much as we can, for even yet will He far exceed. Who hath seen Him that he might tell us? and who can magnify Him as He is^o? Behold He is a great God, exceeding our knowledge: the number of His years incalculable. It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If He cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder Him^p? No man. But although Thou art so great and terrible, yet (if I may be pardoned so to speak) assuredly art Thou to me more lovely still; although there is no end of Thy greatness, so do I see also that there is no end of Thy love. For how else couldst Thou be mindful of me, Thou Who art my God, and I the lowest of Thy servants? How come to me, and give Thyself to me, and with desire desire to be with and to remain with me? Far, far be it from me that I should any longer oppose Thy love, O my Life: I whom so gently Thou, O good Jesus, dost invite to virtue and to Thy love, O Jesu most worthy of love; and dost command me with that voice of Thine, which is able to break the cedars of Lebanon, and the most hard rock, saying, Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, Application
to Commu-
nion.

^a Ecclus. xliii. 29.^o Ecclus. xliii. 30, 31.^p Job xi. 8, 9, 10.

for I am meek and lowly of heart. My yoke, Thou sayest, is easy, and My burden is light: and lo, this seemeth to many "a hard saying," and scarce is there who can hear it. But to be Thy servant, is it not to reign?

Is it not great glory to follow Thee, O Lord? What is there then that can separate us from Thy love? Can it be that most

See whom
thou wishest
to serve.

hateful foe, who, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour? Can it be this most vain world, the empty bubble of honour, the shadow and vapour appearing for a little time? Can defiled and momentary pleasure? Yet these are the things, O grief, which drive miserable men headlong into ruin, and eternal misery; which turn them away from Thee, O Thou Who art all good, Eternal Father, Who with such long-suffering dost sustain us, and waitest for our repentance.

Truly Thy mercy is over all Thy works: for neither if we sin do we injure Thee, and if our transgressions be multiplied we shall avail nothing against Thee: if we be righteous we give Thee nothing: or what wilt Thou receive of our hands? Thou seekest only whence Thou mayst crown us, and therefore Thou wilt have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth^a, and for no one to perish; because Thou art good, and because Thy mercy endureth for ever. It is good therefore for me to cling close to Thee, my God, and to be Thy servant all the days of my life. My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire that it hath alway unto Thy judgments; for truly sweet are Thy words unto my throat, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth. Shall not then my soul be subject unto Thee? Yea, I have sworn and am stedfastly purposed to keep Thy righteous judgments, and I will alway keep Thy law, yea, for ever and ever: for Thou art the King most Mighty, most Wise, most Bountiful, most Kind, most Righteous, most Fair, Ineffable and altogether Desirable.

The sinner
hurteth him-
self.

May it then be allowed to me, by the leave of Thy infinite Goodness, to desire Thee in this the night of my miseries,—Thee the true Light, to which, here placed in the shadow of death, I stretch out my hands. Weak, I sigh for Thee most Mighty: unwise and slow of heart to believe all which has been written or said to me, for Thee I sigh most Wise: poor, I sigh for Thee most Bountiful of gifts. And why do I long and sigh? It is that I may love Thee. This one thing do I ask: Thee only do I seek, that I may follow Thee through evil report and good report, through poverty and abundance, whether it be for life or for death: I will follow by Thy grace whithersoever Thou goest, for ever. Lo, before Thee do I declare from my inmost soul, I will not to be conformed any more to this wicked world, but rather will prove what is Thy good, and acceptable, and perfect will^u. For I say through the grace given unto me, that I will not serve any other

^a Rom. viii. 35.

^r James iv. 14.

^s Job xxxv. 6, 7.

^t 1 Tim. ii. 4.

^u Rom. xii. 2.

master, whether it be any lust of the flesh, or of the eyes, or pride of life^x, but Thee most loving Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of lords^y,
 —to please Thee only in righteousness and holiness: for I know
 that if I please men I cannot be Thy servant^z. Act of zeal.

O that I could lead all to Thee by good example and by virtue, from darkness to the Light, from error to the Way, from falsehood to the Truth. I desire to be spent, and more than spent^a, for Thy glory, and the salvation of those most near to me, that they may perceive, and love, and know, that my Lord Jesus, "He is the God^b," and that there is none else beside Thee, my Redeemer. Be Thou my succour, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation, for in Thee only, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be confounded: in Thee is my salvation and my glory: God is my help, and my hope is in Thee: for my father and my mother have forsaken me, but Thou, O Lord, I hope, hast taken me up. In Thee have I been strong even from my mother's womb. Thou art my Protector, there- Act of love.
 fore I will love Thee, O Lord my strength, with all my heart, and with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my might. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. Let the boundless and honied power of Thy love, O most sweet Jesus, swallow me up, that I may die from love of Thy love, Who hast of love to me vouchsafed to die. Amen.

RULES FOR EXERCISING ONESELF CONCERNING THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

FIRST, practise the exercise of Faith, Hope, and Charity, which have been treated of in many places above. For these Christian virtues unite the soul to the Divine Goodness.

Secondly, communion with God, whereby man from created things ascendeth up to God, and from the perfections of the crea-
 ture is carried on to admiration and love of the Divine perfections. Communion
with God.

Thirdly, purity of intention in all our actions, so far as it is possible to exercise this. Right inten-
tion.

Fourthly, resignation, whereby each man dedicates and consecrates all that he has, and especially his will, to the Divine will, and in all things conforms himself to it. Resignation.

Fifthly, prayer of the affections, which some call recollection. This I just briefly mention here, because we shall treat of it more largely hereafter, when we come to speak of such contemplations.

^x 1 John ii. 16.

^y Rev. xix. 16.

^z Gal. i. 10.

^a 2 Cor. xii. 15.

^b 1 Kings xviii. 39.

Ejaculations.

"Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God."

"My soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?" Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

"My heart hath talked of Thee: seek ye My face: Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Psalm xxvii. 9.

"My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth after Thee." Ps. lxiii. 2.

"Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, even upon His holy hill." Psalm xlvii. 1.

"Who is he among the clouds that shall be compared unto the Lord, and what is he among the gods, that shall be like unto the Lord?" Psalm lxxxix. 6, 7.

"Great is the Lord and marvellous, worthy to be praised; there is no end of His greatness." Psalm cxliv. 3.





IMAGE THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

IN EVERY THING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING
LET THY REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD; FOR WITHOUT HIM
THOU CANST DO NOTHING.

All these things thou hast weighed in vain, unless God be with thee. Pray therefore for that virtue which thou needest; first and above all things through the Passion of Christ (A), and trample Sin under thy foot (B). And now after thy prayer and meditation with respect to it, seize some Occasion (C) of practising that virtue,—earnestly asking God for the attainment of it (D). For “unto which of the Saints canst thou turn (E)?” “the Heavens are not clean in His sight,” and even “His Angels He chargeth with folly.” Pray thou fervently, as one who is at the point of death (F), or situated in the greatest danger. Pray for Faith (G), for Hope (H), for Charity (I), for Humility (K), for Liberality (L), for Chastity (M), for Temperance (N), for Meekness (O), for Diligence (P), and ever mindful of Divine charity pray thou also for the whole Church (Q), for thy Parents and Superiors (R); pray for those under thee, as David did, and for those committed to thy charge (S), for thy Benefactors (T), for thine Enemies (V), for Sinners, that they may be converted (W).

Concerning Prayer.

ALBEIT we possess so many, and such mighty helps, with which to enlighten the understanding, and inflame the will, yet all such How to use supplication. will avail but little, except the grace of God prosper it; for the vessel of the soul, so to speak, will be kept back through our most wretched infirmity and weariness: but if the spirit of the Lord breathe on us and we co-operate with God's grace, we shall be wafted into the eternal haven, singing cheerily glad songs of thanksgiving. Now what would the mariner do, with a vessel fully equipped, when there is no wind blowing; would he not distrust himself, and ask of Him Who bringeth the winds out of His treasures? Let us imitate such an one in the frequency of our petitions and supplications for ourselves and others.

On the Affections of Prayer in general.

OBSERVE well, that it is by the will only that our souls can deserve a good reward, that only if that be holy can we please God. Take notice therefore, that there is no merit, and little use in any sort of meditation and devout reflections, except acts and affections of the will be exercised at the same time. Certain it is, that an act of the will is of more account with God, than the knowledge of all the world. For what is a man profited, if he should know, yea, gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? This I say, that in all thy prayers thou shouldst attend especially to the affections, and above all to love. But the way to attend to the affections in prayer, is by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as often as He breathes upon thy soul. But when He breathes not on thee, then must thou spread the sails, that I may so speak, of devout thought, and either use the sacred ejaculations of this book, or else exercise thyself with the more prolonged act of affection. Observe therefore, that the chief ad-

Affections in prayer to be especially attended to. How to treat them.

vantage rests in the affection; for one act of charity or of contrition makes a man so far God's son and blessed. These therefore be familiar with, and yet neglect not the others. But of this beware, that thou pass not from one affection into another, with the restlessness of a magpie, but rather oughtest thou to drink deeply of some one, especially of charity, humbleness, long-suffering and the like. Among the affections may be reckoned also a sense of God's presence, which in every prayer of thine, but especially in beginning thy prayers, thou oughtest to quicken within thee; and therefore the more readily, because the soul of the righteous man is the temple of God, and the seat of Wisdom. With the Prophet therefore say; Yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not, O Lord our God: or with the Psalmist, If I do not remember Thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: or ponder that saying, Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world; or that other, For in Thee we live and move and have our being. But in like manner as other affections may be enlarged, so in this case: for example, first, by affirmation together with lively faith; secondly, by reprehension of self and contrition; thirdly, by questioning oneself on some point.

Not to pass lightly from one to another.

A sense of God's presence to be included in such affections.

The soul of the righteous God's temple.

Ejaculatory prayers for a sense of God's presence.

How to enlarge the affections.

Observe that from the love of God thou must descend to the love of thy neighbour, and that this also is to be frequently exercised. Yea, and to have enlarged in the soul the affections of the principal graces profiteth exceedingly, to this end, that if at any time occasion ariseth for them, they may with the more ease be exercised, and rooted in the soul. Now the principal graces are a sense of God's presence, humbleness, poverty, patience, purity of purpose, and contempt of worldly things, which, as well as patience, hath its perfection summed up in that saying, Bear and forbear; and it is the sentence of the Holy Ghost, Let patience have its perfect work, by which alone we can possess our souls. But since the principal graces may embrace almost all the rest, thou hast here given thee below a short exercise of each of them, that as often as in thy meditation some motive to one or other arises, it may be of service in rooting that particular grace more firmly in the soul.

Concerning the Affection of a lively Faith, and the Method of exercising it.

How important this is is evident, since it is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It includes, first, the

devout affection towards God, and eternal truth, wherewith a man assenteth with the heart to Him everywhere present, and cleaveth to, and adoreth Him.

Secondly, it includes that humbleness of mind, wherewith, all arguments opposed to it being rejected, we bring the understanding into captivity to the obedience of Christ and of God, not only in one point, but in all the things which are to be believed.

Thirdly, the constancy wherewith, let the world caress or persecute
As did the us, we cleave with the whole heart unto the truth, to the
Martyrs. things which, whether in the way of precept or of counsel, are set forth unto us by God most Good.

Fourthly, it is very useful to ponder well arguments drawn from probable evidence, since for this purpose reason is given, and the light of God's countenance is stamped upon us.

Fifthly, take notice that in all our prayers it is very profitable to quicken our Faith, and both to work and to frame holy desires in accordance with it.

A Short Exercise of Faith.

I believe Thee, O Truth, O Goodness, Who art here and everywhere most present unto me, and that both these things, and whatever else have been written^a, or done, or said by Thee, were for my learning; and I avouch them in Thy presence to be most certain, and that I am without excuse if I believe them not, and shew not my faith, through Thy grace, by my works. Thou art most Mighty, most Wise, most Good, and shall I not believe

God's testi-
monies wor-
thy to be be-
lieved.

Thee? or shall I not embrace these testimonies of Thy will? Of a truth, very worthy are they to be believed and loved by me; whether I look and listen to wise men, or the nature of things. Oh that I had always hearkened unto Thee, Thou Sum of all

Contrition.

good, and had never offended Thee! Would that I had honoured Thee by my course of life, and by my patience had shewn my faith. But henceforth I will eternally believe and love Thee in deed and in truth. Do with me ever what seemeth Thee good,

Resignation.

and I by Thy grace will do Thy will, so far as I know it, out of a most hearty love toward Thee; and whatsoever Thou hast revealed for my salvation, and all that Thou dost, will I gladly embrace, O my Life, and Sum of all good. Amen.

^a Rom. xv. 4.

Concerning the affection of Admiration and the manner of exercising it.

THIS is ordinarily awakened, first, by meditation on the Divine perfections, and the mysteries of our faith.

Secondly, by meditation on sin, and man's misery and vanity; for these two things, when thus considered in contrast to one another, are deep calling unto deep^b.

Thirdly, the book of creation affords ample matter for admiration.

Fourthly, the plentifulness of God's benefits towards us, and especially in the Passion of Christ the Lord; for if when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, there was no more spirit in her^c, what ought the soul to do, which seeth Life dying for its sake? And take notice, that it is most meet, that from one ground of Admiration offered to the soul, it enter in unto the mighty acts of the Lord, and go on to other things wherein He is to be admired.

A Short Exercise of Admiration.

Who is like unto the Lord our God, Who hath His dwelling so high, yet beholdeth the humble things that are in heaven and earth? O how great Thy majesty, O how great Thy goodness, how great Thy power! O how great Thy mercy unto me, who am truly a worm and no man, a vapour, and as nothing. Whatsoever I see or hear, speaketh to me of the splendour of Thy holiness, and declareth Thy wonderful things. Truly doth the Apostle cry out, that God is rich in mercy and of great love, Who when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us in Christ, that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Truly, truly, is infinite bounty seen in them, and weight, and number, and measure, and Thy love towards men, O my Saviour; and my want is known unto Thee; my infirmities to the Physician of my soul. It is enough that Thou knowest them. For dost Thou love, and wilt Thou leave destitute? Be Thou exalted above the heavens, O my God, and Thy glory above all the earth. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, because Thou art magnified terribly; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well^d; for I have considered these things and am astonished,

^b Psalm xlii. 9.

^c 1 Kings x. 4, 5.

^d Psalm cxxxix. 13.

above all have I considered Thy most surpassing charity, for which I love Thee above all things, and will love Thee eternally, since Thou wilt be unto me all in all. Amen.

Concerning the Affection of Sympathy, and the method of exercising it.

THIS may and ought to be exercised most chiefly in meditating on the Lord's Passion, although in divers passages of the life of our Lord Christ, there is like room for its being called forth, and whenever we consider what wrongs He received at the hands of sinners. In order to this, consider first, Who it is That suffereth. Secondly, in what manner thou oughtest to feel these things in thyself, as united to Him, by patient love, by kindred, and other infinite titles. Thirdly, how by amendment of sins and frailties thou mayst prevent His suffering afresh, Him Who is our God, to Whom we owe this mighty debt. Fourthly, offer thyself in return to endure whatever shall seem fit to the Divine goodness, and give thanks; and This so great Benefactor (great, I say, for to suffer for any one is more than to do somewhat for him), embrace thou with a mighty love.

A Short Exercise of Sympathy with Christ's sufferings.

What do I see? what do I hear? The God and Author of Nature, my King, and Lord, and Shepherd, suffereth for me! Do I contain myself and yet believe this? To see God suffering for me, the earth groans, heaven puts on mourning, the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly, and rocks are rent with sorrow, and the veil of the temple is torn asunder, and am I scarcely moved? Still do mine eyes not drop with tears, do I not make mourning over Thee, as a mother useth for an only son†? Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this‡. My King, and my God, and my Father, and my dearest Friend, the Bridegroom of my soul, undergoeth such unworthy, and such manifold sufferings, and do I not suffer in sympathy;—a son with a Father, a servant with my Lord, a soldier with my Immortal King;—Who for me is made mortal, that I may enjoy everlasting pleasures, Who suffereth that I may be freed from everlasting torments, and*

* Isaiah xxxiii. 7.

† Jer. vi. 26.

‡ Jer. ii. 12.

shall I not suffer in sympathy with Him? Suffer me, O Lord Jesu, to say with Thee, I have a baptism, for Thy sake, to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished in me, till that mind be in me, O Father eternal, which was also in Christ Jesus. O Jesu, how truly is it said, Unto us a Child is given, given truly; and Thou wast in misery for me even from Thy youth up. I also, by Thy mercy, am ready to be scourged^b for Thy sake, that I may always, always praise and love Thee; I am ready, for Thou art my Strength, and my Refuge, and my Redeemer. Amen.

Concerning the Affection of Contrition, and the method of exercising it.

THIS is awakened by considering, first, the love of God towards us, and His majesty, and our vileness. Secondly, the mercies of God towards us, especially any peculiar mercies, and yet how (though the ox knoweth his owner) we forget Him. Thirdly, by considering the Passion of our most loving Master, Who was wounded for us, and bruised for our iniquities, yea we it is who have sinned, and so bruised Him. Fourthly, by considering the evils which sin brings on us, and the good things it deprives us of. In the fifth place, admire frequently the patient long-suffering of thy God toward thee, and then be astonished to think how, in all His creatures, He, as it were, is subservient to thee, and that they do not punish thy ingratitude. Sixthly, observe that this affection is most profitable unto salvation, and is therefore to be used very frequently; also that of love; for by these gates doth a sure entrance lie open into Heaven.

A Short Exercise of Contrition.

O Lord Jesu Christ, truly God and Man, alike my Creator and Redeemer, I am grieved from the bottom of my heart, that I have offended Thy Divine Majesty, for Thou art my God and my all, Whom above all things I love and honour. Henceforth I stedfastly resolve and purpose that I will never more offend Thee, but will to the best of my power avoid all occasions of sin, moreover that I will duly make confession of my faults,

^b Psalm xxxviii. 17. Vulg.

and undergo whatever chastening shall be imposed on me for them : yea, and for fuller satisfaction, I this day offer unto Thee myself, my life, and all that is mine, and all my labours. And as I humbly beseech and implore of Thee the pardon of my offences, so I trust that I shall obtain it of Thee through Thine infinite mercy and loving-kindness, through the merits also of Thy most precious Blood, and most holy Passion, and that Thou wilt give me grace also to amend my life, and to persevere also in that which is good, even unto the end. Amen.

Concerning the Affection of Hope, and the method of exercising it.

THE affection of hope may be awakened first, by considering any benefit or promise thou hast received from God, for he who bestoweth a benefit, inviteth men thereby to hope. This therefore may be exercised in every holy mystery. Secondly, as often as we receive any new benefit from God's bounty, or again, are afflicted with any adversity. Thirdly, there is no creature, which may not awaken us to thankfulness and at the same time to hope; for He Who gave us these things of His own accord, will surely, if we ask Him, give us greater things;—Grace, namely, and Glory, and with them all means necessary to salvation, each of which thou mayst run through. Lastly, think over any especial benefits of God towards thine own self, and by the thought of His favours increase hope.

A Short Exercise of Hope.

Thou knowest, O my God, Thou knowest, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to do any thing, and therefore not this thing, (here
Humiliation of self. name particularly,) as of ourselves. I, therefore, that am but dust and ashes, flee unto Thee, that by Thee, and by patience and comfort of the Holy Scriptures, I may have hope, and hoping in Thee may not be confounded. For dost Thou, O Goodness, call me in this manner (name particularly), and can it be that Thou wilt turn me back? dost Thou so invite and draw us to follow Thee, and wilt Thou permit us to faint by the way¹? I know that, putting my trust in Thee, I shall not be put to confusion for ever, although I find a law in my members warring against the

¹ Mark viii. 3.

law of my mind, neither am I worthy of Thy favour; but Thou Who gavest Thine own Body and Blood, as the price of my redemption, and art this day ready to give them unto me as a pledge of salvation, and Who hast prevented me with so many benefits, (here name particularly,) and hast so often commanded us to ask, and hast promised to give: O Goodness, O Truth, Thou wilt surely give me that which I ask, namely, that I may hope in Thee with my whole heart; and although Thou shouldst slay me, O my Hope and my Life, I will hope in Thee^k; and even if the hosts of this world, and of vanity, rise up against me to gainsay me, yet shall it be my portion thus (name particularly) to keep Thy law and to follow Thee; for whither shall we go from Thee, good Jesu^l? Art not Thou my life, and hast not Thou the words of eternal life?

Concerning the Affection of Imitation and the mode of exercising it.

THIS is almost the most important of all; for to this end doth Prayer tend, that we should follow Christ the Lord; and to this end the Son of God came into the world, that He might redeem us, and teach us by His example; for every action of Christ is a lesson to us. Therefore after meditating upon and considering any example set us by Christ, first awaken confusion of face, and see how far short thou art of the footsteps and example of thy Lord; and after contrition stirred up, make purpose of amendment, and hate whatsoever sin is opposed to it. Secondly, give thanks to God, that such a pattern hath been shewn thee, and take notice of the great value of it both in respect of Him Who gives it, and him to whom it is given. Thirdly, set forth its praises, and study to be affected towards that virtue, and see how thou mayst copy it, not only in general but also in detail, and not only in one virtue, but in all thy abilities and powers, that so far as may be, thy behaviour may cry out, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Fourthly and lastly, most humbly implore the grace of God, and beseech Him by that example set by Christ, and by all His other merits.

A Short Exercise of Imitation.

Now I hear one crying with a loud and most loving voice; I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done: and again, Whosoever

^k Job xiii. 15.

^l John vi. 68.

will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. None beside shall come unto Thee; and I hear it said to me as it was to Moses, Look into and make after the pattern which hath been shewed thee^m. I do look into it, and I look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross. Yea I consider Thee, O Lord Jesu, Who enduredst such contradiction against Thyself. But do Thou, O merciful God, behold mine infirmity and the law in my members warring against the law of my mind. Who shall deliver me but Thou, my Redeemer, my Deliverer? Redeem me therefore, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in misery. Redeem me, and draw me after Thee; I will follow Thee wheresoever Thou goest, yea I follow—a subject my King, a son my Father, a creature my Maker; and thus do I follow after the odour of Thy sweet ointments, unto the way of the commandments. Thou, Eternal Wisdom and Truth, wilt not deceive; Thou, Eternal Goodness, I am persuaded, wilt not forsake me; Thou art Power eternal, so that I can do all things in Thee Who strengthenest me. Set Thyself as a seal upon my heart, as a seal upon mine arm. Amen.

Concerning the Affection of Gratitude and the method of exercising it.

In order to exercise this, first, acknowledge any benefit as if it were conferred on thyself alone, albeit perhaps one which is common to many others. Secondly, join on to it all those which result from it, because many benefits are commonly comprised in each one. Thirdly, consider how great thine own unworthiness. Fourthly, how great the love of the Lord most bounteous. Fifthly, from the opposite evils, which fall in the way of others, and which might fall in thine own, extol the loving-kindness of God towards thee. Sixthly, having thus weighed one benefit, go on,—for there is a connection between all things to each other,—to the consideration of other benefits which thou receivest from Heaven by the four elements, whether in body, or soul, or estate. For the mercies of God are infinite. In the seventh place, shew thy gratitude to so great a Benefactor, by giving or offering thyself unto those ends which He requires of thee, and every living creature, that they may aid thee to praise Him.

^m Exod. xxv. 40.

A Short Exercise of Gratitude.

I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will tell of all Thy wonderful works. For Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me, because of Thy loving-kindness and truth towards me. For whence is this unto me, that Thou shouldst remember me, and prevent me with so many (here name particularly) blessings of Thy sweetness, and most loving charity? Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember Thee in the beginning of my mirth. For Thou art most mighty, and I a vapour and as nothing; Thou art most wise, and the Light, and I am darkness, and ignorance; Thou art Goodness itself, and my righteousnesses are as filthy ragsⁿ, and yet Thou bestowest these things upon me; Thou openest Thine hand unto me, and fillest me with all blessing. Behold, mine heart hath been inditing of a good matter, and I dedicate unto Thee all my works; and my whole self; that Thou mayst do Thy will with me, either in good things or in evil things; (here name particularly;) in time and in eternity I deliver myself unto Thee, Who hast delivered Thine own self for me. I give myself in return unto Thee, for Thine I am; I live lastly unto Thee, that Thou mayst live in me, and that therefore I may die, and that I may love Thee with my whole heart. Amen.

Concerning the Affection of Spiritual Joy, and the method of exercising it.

It is, in the first place, to rejoice concerning God, and His perfections, the power, wisdom, goodness, which are inherent in Him. Secondly, concerning the outward manifestations of them, or His extrinsic goodness. Thirdly, concerning the good things which the soul hath with God, and obtaineth from God the fountain of all goodness, viz., forgiveness of sins, grace, and glory, &c. In the fourth place, to reject all that good which is of the creature, as an enemy to true pleasure and joy. Fifthly, to ask God to grant and confirm joy unto us.

ⁿ Isaiah lxiv. 6.

A Short Exercise of Spiritual Joy.

What is my joy in this wilderness, O my God, save in Thee, Who art every good thing? but alas! I see Thee afar off and away from me, and yet near and within me, and behold Thee through a glass darkly^o. How then, and of what kind, can there be joy to me, who sit in this darkness, and see not Thy light, O Sun of righteousness? Yet will I greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; because after darkness I look for light. O that my heart and my flesh may rejoice in Thee, the living God! For every where, even in this vale of tears, there is unto me occasion of rejoicing. For the whole creation is subject unto me, and the heavens declare Thy glory, and shew forth unto me Thy love. I see the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem placed in sight, that I may not forget Thee, or my own country. Let my tongue cleave unto the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember Thee. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy works, and I will rejoice in the operations of Thine hands; and since I find it written, Delight thou in the Lord, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire, wilt Thou not give me mine, which is, to rejoice in Thee, my Lord, alway, to triumph in Thee,—in Thy glory and because every knee boweth to Thee? O that I may so rejoice, that I may resolutely put back from me the joys of this life, and may enjoy Thee; and may bear wearinesses manfully, and whatsoever shall seem good unto Thee; for I am Thine; and like as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God.

Concerning the Affection of Love, and the method of exercising it.

OUT of every creature, out of every blessing, out of every mystery of the life of Christ, may this be made to flow. To this affection, however, it will conduce, if thou set thyself, with body and mind both at rest, in the presence of God, and behold His countenance, Who is the Chief and Universal Good. Secondly, to rejoice in Him; and whatever is, that to desire as His will. Thirdly, to esteem Him above all things, and despise the creature. Fourthly, to rejoice in His perfections. And in the fifth place, to desire that all men may know and love them, and to grieve that neither the world nor thyself do so as He deserves. In the sixth place, to resign thine own will entirely to Him. Seventhly, to resolve to observe all His precepts and counsels. Eighthly, to hope to be able to do this in order to obtain union with Him.

^o 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

^p See Tobit, ch. v. Vulgate.

A Short Exercise of Love.

O Love, O my God, give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments, whether Thou speakest to my heart by Thy Word, or by Thy Works. For whatsoever I learn unto salvation, Thou, most present with me teachest me, with inmost love, O Thou my Health, and Medicine of my soul. And how great, how great the love wherewith Thou teachest me;—me, who am nothing in Thy sight. Are then my goods any thing unto Thee, that, with such free love, Thou shouldst prevent me with so many goods, and with Thy charity? For so, Eternal Father, hast Thou loved the world, that Thou gavest Thine Only-begotten Son; and so, most bountiful Jesu, Son of God, hast Thou loved it, that Thou hast given Thy soul for me unto death: and can Thy precepts or Thy counsels be grievous unto me? I will therefore love these commandments (here name particularly) and Thee, O God my strength: O how good is it to hold me fast by Thee. What, then, shall be able to separate me from Thy love? shall distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or persecution, or sword? for Thy love is strong as death, and, as I trust, many waters cannot quench love^a, the fire, which Thou camest to send upon the earth, and wouldst should be vehemently kindled.

^a Cant. viii. 6, 7.

IMAGE THE TWENTY-NINTH.

LEARN WHERE IS WISDOM, WHERE IS STRENGTH, WHERE IS UNDERSTANDING: THAT THOU MAYST KNOW ALSO WHERE IS LENGTH OF DAYS, AND LIFE; WHERE IS THE LIGHT OF THE EYES AND PEACE; WHO HATH FOUND OUT HER PLACE? OR WHO HATH COME INTO HER TREASURES?

There be many who say, who will shew us any good? Behold, He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice;—(and if by frequent examination we judge ourselves as this holy man of God (A), we shall not be judged of the Lord;)—and to love mercy, by bearing patiently the infirmities of others; and to walk humbly with thy God,—even with thy Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath come down from Heaven to be with thee (B)? To these add also frequent meditation on the Passion of Christ (C) and divine contemplation (D), with the renewal of repentance and often partaking of the most holy Sacrament (E). To all of which add most especially the love of God and our neighbour (F), after the example of that love which, like the Pelican in the wilderness, feedeth her young with her own life-blood, and dwelleth in solitary places. By these means thou shalt arrive at true tranquillity of mind, and that place where there is light of the eyes, and the peace which passeth all understanding: especially if, in solitude of heart, thou wilt by pious exercises adorn thy soul.





On Perfection.

THIS book has in the first part treated of the way of Beginners; and then of those further advanced, and the aids proper to each way. And now I purpose treating of the way of the Perfect, and the exercises proper to them; which, however, as has been said, are not in such a sense proper to them, as not to be so to the others also. Since for the most part, or at least in some measure, all exercises that can be mentioned are common to all, even as also are all the virtues; only, the Perfect possess and exercise them in a more perfect manner. Perfect I call them; not that they are so in every respect, for who is so? Yea, truly, saith Bernard, no man is a perfect man, except he desires to be more perfect^a: but then I call them so who have made great advances in holiness, especially in the graces of humbleness and charity.

Since, however, perfectness standeth in the love of God; this, and those things which especially dispose the Christian soul thereto, are here treated of. But these are purity of heart, such as is gained by frequent renewal, self-examination and confession, accompanied by the grace of God. I say accompanied by God's grace, for who can make clean that which is conceived of an unclean seed? Can any but only He, Who searcheth the hearts and reins? Yet this is not enough, but the mirror of the soul, being cleansed, ought to be irradiated by the Sun of Righteousness. But what more suitable to this end than frequent communion, and earnest meditation upon our most loving Master, Christ crucified; and than a pure intention in all our actions, by which we may direct them all towards God, and offer a sacrifice most pleasing to the Divine Goodness, may love Him in all creatures, and love them all in Him? From hence the soul ascendeth to the frequent enjoyment of the Divine Presence, and in that noonday light, and wounded with looking upon her Creator, she is inflamed with that eternal love, a love which maketh her not only to strain Him in loving embraces, but through which she draweth all things to Him, seeth all things in Him, and beholdeth Him alone in all things, knoweth

The Presence
of God as
the noonday.

^a Bernard, Epist. xxxiv. ad Drog.

nothing save Jesus, and Him crucified;—Him amongst boys a Boy, fairer than the children of men; Him amongst youths a Youth, increasing in favour with God and man; Him in the man a Perfect Man, and her own espoused. Him, when she hath found, sought for long, long desired, and the object of a thousand sighs, she embraceth wherever she be, whatever doing; whether she eateth or drinketh, or whatever else she doeth, she doeth all for His sake, Who loved her, and in Him she liveth, dieth, and repositeth; repositeth in the quiet of contemplation, and sitteth in the beauty of peace, and in plentiful ease, and attaineth to the marks of salvation, the Holy Spirit bearing witness that we are the children of the heavenly Father, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation.

Wherein Perfection standeth.

SINCE we are to treat here of Perfection, thou wouldst fain perhaps, and with reason, be informed in what grace perfection chiefly consisteth.

Hear this, then, in a few words. First, that it consisteth not in gifts freely given, as the gift of miracles, of sublime meditation and of prayer: not in great knowledge, even though divinely infused, as in the case of Solomon; nor in the perfectness of our state and condition, even though that were Angelic; nor in the observance of a stricter rule, nor in the excellence of chastity, to which that rule hath reference. These are indeed great helps to holiness, which consisteth in charity, yet are they not perfectness themselves; as for instance working miracles is not so, though they be great indications of sanctity, since the Lord said of them, Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; and as I said, on the testimony of St. Gregory^b, they do not make piety, but only shew it. But perfectness standeth in the love of God and our neighbour, for love is the fulfilling of the law; and therefore, saith an Apostle, though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Perfection is
not in gifts
freely given.

Perfection, in
what it con-
sists, viz. cha-
rity.

^b Hom. 9. in Evangel.

But love is twofold ; the one of desire, by which we love God for our own sake, and our good : the other of affection, by which we love Him not for our own sakes, but for Himself and His goodness ; and in this is perfectness. God indeed is not loved without reward^c, though He ought to be loved without looking for reward. For true love cannot go unrewarded, yet is no hireling. Understand this however not only of affective, but effective love, of love not only as it affects the soul, but as it bringeth forth works. For it is not only rejoicing in the good things of God, in His presence and converse, that argueth true love, but the being impelled to keep His commandments and His counsels. For, as saith Gregory, the proof of love is the shewing forth works. And St. John saith, My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Which has been thus expounded excellently well, that a passionate love, by which it was said above the love of the animal soul was signified^d, sometimes most affects the less diligent Christian, the more perfect Christian less. For the love each man bears is not according to his feelings, and the degree in which, when in that state of mind, he thinks he loves ; rather is it commensurate with his being grounded in virtue and charity, and with his being found faithful in keeping that which is commanded him. For sweet affections towards God, are, after a sort, carnal and deceitful, sometimes pertaining rather to nature than grace, the heart than the spirit, the sensual than the rational part of man. What indeed else doth the Truth itself declare, thus saying, He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. But we ought to love Him with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength. With our whole heart, saith Chrysostom^e, that is, let not thine heart incline to love any thing more than God : neither delight thyself in any show of the world, in honours, in gold, and the like, more than in God, but account that thou hast all these things in God, that thou mayst love God more than all. He, thou seest, wills the whole heart, the whole soul to be given up to Him : therefore, if thou love aught and not for His sake, thou lovest Him too little and imperfectly. But in order to perfectness, it behoveth to transfer all affection towards the creatures to their Author Himself : which will take place, if thou divest thyself of such. How am I to do that ? thou wilt say perhaps. Tell me, what dost thou hate ? Dost not thou hate that which is hurtful and pernicious, and the obstacle to greater good ? And this surely is what the love of the creature is unto thee, by reason

Love is twofold.

The proof of love.

Men's love not according to their feelings.

To love God with all the heart, what it is.

The love of the creature, how to strip ourselves of it.

^c Bernard, lib. de dilig. Deo.

^d Richard. in Cant. c. 6.

^e Oper. imperfect. in Matt. Pseudo-Chrys.

of which thou takest somewhat away from thy love for the Creator; when wert thou to love Him with all the heart and soul and strength, yet worthily thou couldst not love One Who is thy every Good, and the source of all good. But if thou knowest all created good whatsoever to be in God, ten thousand times more perfectly, and that thou mayst enjoy Himself, what creature shall have power to deceive thee, and divide thine heart? This is what Thomas à Kempis elegantly expresses^f. He to whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, is able to be of stable heart, and to remain peaceable in God. In the happiness of Heaven, God alone will be all in all; and in

that which is enjoyed in this vale of tears, the perfect attain
The temper of the perfect man. in some degree to the same thing; for they draw all things to

God, and are by all things drawn to Him: they see all things in Him, for they look on all created things as faint and scanty glimmerings of the eternal Light, and make them ladders to ascend to Him by. They have all things in Him, so that they say truly with that holy Father, My God, the God of my heart, and my All! and therefore rather than displease Him—they willingly lose, yea, and of their own accord throw aside and despise, wealth and honours, fame and popularity, parents, children, friends, and whatsoever can be held dear; but chiefly they hate and lose themselves and their own life, in order that they may find it; these things they do willingly, as a child would give his baubles and

his shells, in order to obtain a kingdom. And verily all
In what posture the Christian should hold himself. Christians ought to be ready to give up wealth, fame, life, all things, rather than God's favour; and this it is

to love God above all things, so that rather than offend Him, they would willingly be deprived of wife, children, wealth, honours, and life itself, like the army of Martyrs. Whence learn, that all men are to moderate, the perfect even to deny, all affections towards created things. For Christ's perfect servant, saith Jerome^g, hath nought but Christ, or if he hath ought but Christ, he is not perfect.

To this books concerning the vanity of this world persuade.
Books concerning the vanity of this world useful. For, if we first see through the vanity of human things, esteem and love for them, which drags unhappy man de-

luded by self-love to certain ruin, is abated. For self-love or cupidity, according to Augustine^h, is the root of all evil, as charity again is the root of all good. For whenever our desires are set on the creature, it is out of self-love, it is from that impulse that the desire arises. Which self-love must be overcome by (if we may so speak) self-hatred, that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy

^f De Imit. Christ., lib. i. cap. 3. § 2.

^g Epist. i. ad Heliodor.

^h August. Serm. 39. de Temp.

Ghost. Thus the desire of wealth is to be overcome by choosing poverty; fondness for bodily comforts, and pleasures, and relations, by relinquishing them; love of our own will, freedom, and honour, by renunciation and a voluntary subjection. Now the soul which has attained to this, as naturally tends towards God, as flames burst forth from an opened furnace, or as a cork which has been sunk under water, floats upwards, when the weight is removed which kept it there: for so doth the soul, that is freed from the love of the creature, fly forth, and, like the needle, resteth in its pole, that is, on God; and cleaveth to Him, and is made of one spirit with Him; lastly, wisheth and loatheth what God loatheth and wisheth, and this is perfect friendship with God, and perfectness itself. So hath the Lord Jesus plainly testified, saying, I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us. And in another place, who is My mother, and who are My brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother. See how close the union betwixt God and the soul; how great, how sincere the friendship! But how then, thou wilt say perhaps, do the righteous differ from one another, the perfect from the imperfect, since even these last ought to forsake all things rather than God? I answer, as kings from peasants, the strong man from the weak, as one star differeth from another star in glory; as seeds differ, of which one bringeth forth thirty-fold, another sixty-fold, another an hundred-fold; as chapmen do, one gaining two, another three, another five talents more. The perfect man, I say, doth all the things that God willeth, as it is said of David. To which the Apostle James exhorteth, saying; That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. The imperfect man doth for the most part such things only as are commanded him under penalty of eternal torment. The perfect man striveth with all the powers of his soul to cleave unto God: for the understanding he bringeth into captivity to the obedience of faith, and in all his works magnifieth God: with the memory he hath Him every where present, with the will loveth Him in all His creatures, and cleaveth unto Him; speaketh not, save the oracles of God, and out of love towards Him: ministereth not, but as of the ability which God giveth: from all he seeth, heareth, tasteth, feeleth, soareth up unto God; striveth to lead all unto Him, seeth every where something of God's to love: and because he knoweth to discern the precious from the base, so loveth created things as through them to enter into the mighty

The soul,
cleansed
from crea-
ture-love tak-
eth wing, &c.

The union
betwixt God
and the soul.

How the
perfect man
useth all the
powers of the
soul.

The perfect
man
seeth
God in all
things.

things of God, and into that most fervent furnace of love, which His benefits conferred on every creature for our sakes, and on us in them, kindle, as it were cinnamon and balsam for a sweet odour.

God's com-
mandments,
for what or-
dained. All God's commandments he keepeth, for they are ordained in order to the removal of the things that be contrary to charity, and along with which charity cannot exist. Counsels of perfection on the other hand are ordained in order to the removal of such things as are hindrances to charity in action, but which are not in themselves opposed to charity: such as marriage, secular employments, and other like things. From which it is plain that he is called a Who is a
perfect man. perfect man, who is not only guiltless of any mortal sin, but who also keepeth far aloof from these things, which draw us towards it, and hinder us from goodness; or, perfectness consisteth in the best practice of the virtues, and in the removal of all such hindrances as are opposed to, or keep back charity; and again, in that affection itself of the love of God, which is the end of the law. Hence the Lord saith, I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End¹; and Gregory observeth^k appositely, The beginning and the end of virtue is love.

But thou wilt ask, whether every one is capable of arriving at perfection. I answer, certainly he is; and in whatever condition of Whether per-
fection is in
the power of
every one life he be placed, even though one may be more suitable than another for it. Cassian saith^l, It is evident that no one at all is excluded from perfectness of heart by unskilfulness in learning; that homeliness is no impediment to the attainment of purity of soul: yea, when God discourseth with the simple, he commonly exalteth them to a higher measure of holiness, that no flesh may glory in His sight. It may be thou canst not pray, meditate, confess, communicate frequently, canst not emulate the holy austereness of some; yet be patient and humble, love thy neighbour and God in deed and in truth, praise His will in all things, and thou shalt obtain the pearl of great price, the treasure hid in a field, wisdom, true perfection.

Exercise.

O Jesu, good Master, good Shepherd, my Guide and my own familiar Friend, wouldst Thou have me live unto Thee? O King of kings, me, sayst Thou, to Thee? wherefore, I beseech Thee, tended all Thy labour, pains and sorrows this way, that it might be well with me? is it, therefore, that

¹ Rev. xxii. 13.

^k Greg. Hom. xxiii, ad Rom.

^l Cassian, col. 10.

to Thine elect Saints Thou impartest of Thy griefs and wounds? hast Thou, therefore, truly put on man's nature, that I may put on Thee? didst Thou, therefore, descend from Heaven, and dost Thou with condescension so incomprehensible so often stoop down, that I might ascend unto Thee, and be one with Thee, and be made like unto Thee? didst, Thou, therefore, take upon Thee the form of a servant, and become, alas! for my sake, a stranger upon earth, that I might be an inheritor and citizen of Thy kingdom? Are these things true, and certain, and undoubted, and am I afraid to follow Thee? Are we not Thy husbandry, Thy building, and Thou the Foundation and Corner-stone? Is it that Thou hast graven a pattern for me upon Thyself the true Rock, and hast marked it out with Thy blood, out of Thy boundless love? O that I may build upon it, not wood, hay, stubble, but gold and silver and precious stones; that I may honour Thee, and Thou mayst take pleasure in me, and, that I may learn of Thee to be meek and lowly of heart. And oh that I may know, and desire to know, nothing but Thee, O most sweet Jesu, to know Thee crucified. For this is indeed eternal life, O Father eternal, that we should know Thee the true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, and that we should follow His steps. Therefore I put Thee on, O Lord Jesu, and desire to follow Thy pattern; and I look unto Thee alone, the Finisher, and Recompenser, and most loving Redeemer; and I desire to run the way of Thy commandments, that I may come unto Thee, and love Thee with my whole heart. Amen.

RULES IN ORDER TO IMITATION OF CHRIST, AND THE ATTAINMENT
OF PERFECTION.

OFTEN behold Christ present, but then chiefly, when some action presses to be done. Consider how He, when upon earth, performed the same, or advised it should be done, and let this be thy copy.

And observe, that it helpeth greatly towards this imitation of Christ Jesus, that each should kindle often in himself the love of Him; by these means, as we see plainly in the case of pupils, the manners of a master and friend are insensibly put on.

Thirdly, let Him be as the balance to weigh thine actions in, whether past or future. For He is the rule of our life, the square by which to build our spiritual edifice, and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy.

But and if thou wouldst have steps whereby to mount up to perfection; lo,

Steps to perfectness. this is the first: after thou hast been purged from greater sins, diligently to avoid also even the least, and to practise moderation. The second, to despise, or at any rate zealously to renounce temporal things. The third, to bridle thy passions—especially the lust of honour. The fourth, to set restraints on thy tongue, and above all things to refrain it from detraction and vanity. The fifth, by frequent renewal, to seek purity of heart and thought; zealously advancing on daily to reach forth unto those things which are before, and to perfect thy actions and thy thoughts. For the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day^m. The sixth, to maintain patience in adversity, and to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations; for patience must have her perfect workⁿ. For many in respect to prayer, and their obedience to discipline, are attentive, modest, quiet; but if thou touch the mountains, they will smoke. The seventh step is, frequently to exercise inward virtues; especially the weightier ones, charity, single-mindedness, zeal, and an abiding sense of God's presence. The eighth, to have no will but God's, to murmur at nothing, but amidst the various vicissitudes of affairs to maintain evenness and tranquillity of soul. Examine thyself on the subject of each of these things, and in respect to each of them awaken contrition. Purpose to mount up these steps, and seek the grace of God. For the first step to virtue is the desire to attain it.

^m Prov. iv. 18.

ⁿ James i. 2, 4.



IMAGE THE THIRTIETH.

OBSERVE IN EVERY THOUGHT, WORD, AND ACTION, FOR WHOM THOU
DOEST IT, WHETHER IT BE FOR THE SAKE OF GOD, OR FOR THINE
ENEMIES.

In this life thou art situated in a place between God on one side, and on the other the devil and thine enemies; consider this, and diligently ascertain to which thou belongest; which in every thought, word, and work, thou servest, and desirest to please. Is it not to please God? and to fulfil entirely His perfect will? offer therefore unto Him thine heart (A) and all thy works, of whatever kind they be. The Angel shall bear them from earth (B) and present them before the throne, in the presence of His Divine Majesty; and He Himself in His mercy will crown with His gracious acceptance all thy works (C). But if thine actions are from thine own will, and not from the will of God or the desire of pleasing Him, if they are actuated by Avarice (D), or by Concupiscence (E), or by Pride of life (F), or the desire of Glory and Fame (G), then thou wilt greatly deceive thyself. For thou shalt receive nothing more for all this than a little handful of smoke; and all thy works thou wilt offer up and devote to the Devil (H), and these, if thou perish, will only serve as fuel to the flames (I), in which thou thyself shalt for ever burn and be tormented.

An Exercise

CONCERNING PURITY OF INTENTION.

In the first place observe, that purity of intention consists in a man's doing a thing because it is pleasing in God's sight, because God approves and wills it, Who is worthy, by reason of His infinite goodness, that all things should be done unto His honour.

And this purity of intention may be of two sorts, the one by the very act itself, when any work hath direct reference to God; the other virtual, when either in the beginning of a transaction, or in the beginning of our day, all our actions are addressed to God by general purpose, so that this purpose influenceth them all.

The actual sort, however, must be often called into use, for this reason, that it not unseldom happens that a man's purpose may change, even though he should in the morning have resolved to do all things unto God's glory; as happens also with other good intentions, as for instance, of acting so and so, because it is agreeable to reason, that we may attain to virtue, may copy the Saints, may root out vices, may grow in grace, may outstrip our neighbour, may obey those who are over us, may save our souls. But all these are to be referred to their ultimate end; that is, the glory of God, for Whom all were made, and for Whose glory all things were created; for He hath made all things for Himself^a. And so, though we may seek for our selves goods, and gifts, and glory, yet if we be faithful servants, and our souls chaste brides unto Christ, they ought to seek no ornament for the neck, except because it pleaseth the Bridegroom, and He so willeth; nor should Christ's soldier put on any sort of ornament or weapon, except such as He assigns for our defence. Whence David saith unto the Lord, Thou art my worship, Thou art my praise^b; his strength he kept for Him, unto His service, and besought

^a Prov. xvi. 4.

^b Psalm lviii. 9. Vulgate.

graces and abilities, that all in himself should praise God alone, and the glory of the servants should do honour to their Lord; to this end he invited all, and desired to tell them what God had done for his soul.

Yet observe that it is not unprofitable to propose several ends and intentions, or motives of obedience, of mortification, of zeal, of obtaining blessings of God, of gratitude, at the beginning of any work; since a variety of virtues is thereby exercised, and our work goeth up on high, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense^c, and with all the varied sweetness of the merchant's rich odours. And yet the love of God both sufficeth by itself, and holdeth the first place, since in it all are embraced, for charity "suffereth long and is kind," and the like, and in this manner containeth in itself many various attributes.

Note secondly, that rectitude of purpose is so essential, that works of an indifferent nature without it are never good; nay, that works good in themselves, yet without it cannot be good; and indeed evil works may in themselves be good, that is to say, when they are not at the time known to be evil, but are, when performed, done with a pure intention; for we are never to do evil: that good may come. Works indifferent, therefore, such as traffic, labour, study, and even amusement, a right purpose maketh to be good; as indeed they could have no merit, if done without it, as when one giveth alms out of mere natural compassion: for God is no recompenser of works which are neither wrought for Him in His vineyard, nor otherwise for His service. Whence the great value of purity and holiness of purpose is manifest, since it turneth all indifferent actions whatsoever into good, like Midas' wand overlaying all with a golden charity, and giving life and shape to all a man's thoughts, and words, and works. A good purpose, therefore, is of more value than the work itself; it is a mine of true gold, which is charity; it is the best of preservatives; it is the foundation of all good things. Now if the foundation be only of earth, as in the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw^d, the whole work will easily fall to pieces. Whence stress is to be laid, especially in matters of religion, not on what is done, but with what mind and temper. Therefore Scripture saith, God had respect unto Abel^e, i. e. to the temper of mind, and only afterwards adds, and to his offering. For gifts derive their value, even with us, only from the disposition and person of the giver; so that we should be unwilling to receive gifts from an enemy. In like manner the whole burnt-offerings and the incense of ungodly men find no favour in the sight of God, as plainly appeared in the instance of

Several ends or purposes of use.

Purity of intention necessary.

Things indifferent made good by the purpose.

The purpose is the foundation of action.

Gifts estimated by the mind of the giver.

^c Cant. iii. 6.

^d Dan. ii. 34.

^e Gen. iv. 4.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. A right purpose, on the other hand, maketh our very least actions of great price with God, as appears in the widow's case, who offered but two mites. To do a thing only to avoid hell and its torments, even though it may be good, is but the obedience of a slave; to do it in order to obtain a reward, that of an hireling; but to do it out of love, and to please God, this is the obedience of a son. Consider how thou wouldst thyself like to be served; wouldst thou wish to be beloved, as St. Augustine saith, by a wife, merely because thou impartest unto her worldly goods: in such a case would there not be danger of her deserting thee in a time of poverty?

Note thirdly, that in order that an action should merit aught at God's hands, it is requisite, first, that it be good in all its circumstances; secondly, that the doer of it be acceptable in God's sight; thirdly, that it be done with a right purpose, which by the common consent of theologians is to be understood at the very least of such virtual purity of purpose, as arises from that act of a just man's will by which he decrees to make God the ultimate end of all his thoughts, words, and works, and determines to serve Him and please Him in all things. And thus when there is an absence of any wrong aim, the works of a righteous man, even without any actual devotion of them, are directed to God; if at least there be no circumstance in the work to vitiate it. But indifferent actions should be ennobled by a good purpose and aim, as because God hath willed them to be done, because they are either essential or serviceable to some good end, or at the least because our natural reason prescribes their performance.

Note fourthly, that as in the beginning of an action the purpose may be faulty, so also may it become so in the course of it, or sometimes in its ending. Therefore we must watch always, that the tares of vanity spring not up, that our wine be not mixed with water, that we stray not from the way.

Note fifthly, that nothing so vitiates the purpose as self-love, or motives of self-interest, or self-gratification, which make a man attend to his own profit in all things, to seek his own, and the estimation of the world. But other affections also, indeed any other, if not moderated, often vitiate the purpose, and outrun reason, but most of all the passion of vain-glory, and the desire to please, or fear to offend others.

Note sixthly, that although the frequent reiteration of a right purpose has been recommended, yet this must not be done in a forced manner; and it will be sufficient at first to renew it in the morning, at night, before our devotions, before self-examination, the Communion, exercise or bodily labour, meals, relaxation, and chiefly at

each of the hours, or at certain places and fixed times, as each may find most convenient.

Note seventhly, degrees of singleness of purpose. The first, to do or forbear nothing on worldly respects ; the second, for a man to do all he has to do throughout in the strength of his first intention in the morning ; the third, to renew his purpose frequently and actually, although without gust of devotion ; the fourth, not only to renew it, but with fervent love ; the fifth, having done something with another end, presently, as if compelled in himself by some necessity, to offer it unto God, and to return into the way with a generous love, which chooseth to please none but Him.

Note eighthly, eleven tokens of it. First, for a man to set about things without hurry or discomposure ; secondly, to proceed in any work with such affection, that if it be asked to what end it is done, what it tends to, as a traveller might answer to a like question, that he was going to such and such a place, so his may be, my end, my aim is God's glory ; and if he perceives himself to swerve ever so little in his journey, presently to return into the way : thirdly, not to be of anxious mind, nor drawn hither and thither on account of what he has to do ; fourthly, after aught done, to be of composed mind, nor over solicitous what others may think of it ; fifthly, not to be disturbed at an unprosperous issue ; sixthly, not to entertain idle thoughts afterwards ; seventhly, not to look carelessly, whether many or few praise, behold, hear of, what he doeth ; eighthly, to despise men's judgment ; ninthly, in all gratifications of sense to be very temperate, and willingly to forbear all delicateness and effeminacy ; tenthly, to do what he hath to do just as diligently in private as in public ; eleventhly, to be resigned to all things, and neither to wish nor to fear aught.

Meditation the First, on Purity of Intention.

By way of place, imagine to thyself the Universe, and God in the midst of Heaven, filling all things with blessing ; and close at hand Hell and the foul demon, the flesh, the world, and self-will, striving to fill all things with confusion, by drawing us back from God, our Lord and chief Good.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER that thou must needs work for one of the four, and that if thy works be not done for God's sake, they shall all, seem they out-

wardly never so holy, vanish for mere emptiness into smoke. O how many from want of a true and right purpose, wealthy men, and kings, yea and many too who have been consecrated to God's especial service, when they come to die, shall sleep, and in their hands find nothing^f. Long unmeasured journeys doth the traveller accomplish in hope of ease and wealth to be won; and if, when many a labour has been gone through, he be disappointed of his hope, what grief and anguish pierce his heart! So will it be with thee, if, thy journey to eternity and all its toils accomplished, thou shalt then find all those toils to have been idle, and to have won for thee nothing but punishment, most grievous and never ending. O good Jeau, I am confounded, that I should ever have loved any but Thee, in word, or deed, or tongue: henceforth Thou shalt be my God, O Lord, and I will set Thee as a seal upon mine heart, as a seal upon mine arm, and upon all my works^g.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that it is a sort of idolatry, when a man forsaketh God Who is present to him, and turneth his back upon Him, his face to some idol, some created thing, or to his own will and advantage, in contempt of God and His will. To this end is that saying of Samuel; Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry^h; whence also covetousness is called idolatry, and turning aside from God. But as the Psalmist saith, They that make them are like unto them, and so are all such as put their trust in them. But Thou, O my God, art my glory, Thou art mine end. To Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavensⁱ. God forbid, God forbid that I should purpose to turn mine eyes down unto the earth, that I should not behold Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and that sin should reign in my mortal body, and I should turn aside from Thee. For in every sin we turn to the creature, as unto an idol. By Thee therefore, my Hope, will I hold me fast; for it is good for me to hold me fast by Thee, and to put my trust, my joy, my love, in Thee.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER the similitude I shall set before you. Suppose a king had raised some vile beggar from the dunghill, had adorned him with gifts, had invested him with signal honours, to the end he should fight with his own and the king's mortal enemy; suppose, I say, such an one should

^f Psalm lxxvi. 5.^h 1 Sam. xv. 23.^g Cant. viii. 6.ⁱ Psalm cxxiii. 1.

presently, as soon as he had been thus exalted, betake himself to this mortal enemy, and lavish on him the gifts of his most loving king, to the end that he might displease the king, (doing all this too in his sight,) and might ally himself to the enemy; what grief such conduct would cause his sovereign? Yet apply the case. And it matters not whether thou offer small things or great unto the enemy; for small sins are, so to say, earnest of treason, since they are the road that leadeth to it. Alas! O Lord, how often have I abused this or that thing unto vanity, and changed my glory into shame, and made myself a laughing-stock unto mine enemies! Lo! now I sleep in the dust, bound with chains and taken captive; give Thine hand unto me, and send Thine angel^k, that I may be delivered from all the expectation of mine enemies, and may sing unto Thee, O my Glory, and may live unto Thee, and bless Thee for ever.

And now turn thyself unto God, renew the promise made in Baptism; and whatsoever resolutions thou hast made of religious service unto God, especially if thou art in any more particular manner devoted to His service, repeat thy promises, so often renewed in Communion and Confession, of serving Him alone, and living *unto* His glory, that thou mayst live for ever *in* His glory.

A Second Meditation on Purity of Intention.

CONTEMPLATE God in all His creatures, just as the sun, making his influence felt in all things.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER how God is in all created things, ready, as it were, continually to wait upon men, not for any profit to Himself, but only to us; whilst we, ingrateful as we are, despising God, and the reward of that eternal glory which no thought can conceive, would rather labour for very dung. O Jesu, such is our madness, such Thy goodness! For dung, I say; for I do count, saith St. Paul, all things but dung^l. For what have we out of all these things, when they have passed away? what, for the most part, except something to blush at? Oh how shall we some day wish, that we had laboured for Thee, and not for vanity! Nor workest Thou *now* only for us, my God, and my Creator, but even from

^k Acts xii. 11.

^l Phil. iii. 8.

all eternity Thou hast purposed in Thyself to frame these things for us, and hast loved us alway, and ever since the world was made, hast preserved all these things for us; and Thou sustainest, and nourishest us; yet we, of this brief moment, our life, give not the thousandth part to Thee. Henceforth will I not swerve from Thy commandments for ever, but will love Thee, my strength, my strong rock, my defence^m.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER that whatever we make the end of any work, it is that which really governs us, and its servants we areⁿ. When, then, we are enslaved to brutal desires, then we voluntarily yield ourselves as brute beasts unto a wretched slavery. Hence if the drunkard be asked, why is he not sober? he must answer, Because my flesh draws me, as grass draws a sheep; draws me, yea chains me, and drags me, to the ruin I ought to give any price to be delivered from. Whence if to be the slave of one be grievous, what grievousness to be the slave of so many masters. Yet God, in Whose sight we do all, proffers us true freedom; but we prefer hard slavery. O what blindness in *us*! O what long-suffering in *Thee*, O God! Our most glorious, most mighty, most tender Parent, we reject, and sell ourselves for slaves to cruel tyrants, and boast us in our slavery. How long halt we between two opinions^o? If the Lord be God, let us serve Him; but if some creature, let us renounce the Lord. Behold, O Lord, I offer and commend my heart unto Thee by an everlasting covenant for all the days of *my* life, of *Thy* eternity.

THIRD POINT.

LET the Third Point consist in this similitude. Suppose the affianced bride of a very great king; and that this king, in token of his love, had sent unto her beforehand servants and gifts, the more to kindle in her love toward himself, and then suppose her to prefer his servants to himself, and to use the king's gifts to arm them against their sovereign; would not every one judge such conduct most shameful? Such baseness is not heard of by the world; and yet, O my soul, is it enacted daily, whilst we abuse the creatures which God created, (in order that they might minister unto us, and allure us to love Him,) to His dishonour. What is it in which God hath angered thee? what hath He done unto thee, that thou shouldst throw Him off^p? Oh Thou, Who art all goodness and mercy infinite, forcibly bring back Thy fugitives, graciously receive

^m Psalm xviii. 1.^o 1 Kings xviii. 21.ⁿ Rom. vi. 16.^p Mic. vi. 3.

them that return, and them that will hold them fast by Thee, the Fount of life, send Thou not thirsting away. I render unto Thee Thy gifts, and for all Thy creatures I give Thee thanks and blessing; graciously accept my heart and my love.

A Third Meditation on Purity of Intention, and seeking the greater Glory of God.

IMAGINE thyself placed as in the former Meditation.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER first, how the Lord created this universe, as a most beautiful habitation, and in it, not a few things only, but things without number for the profit and delight of mortals: and how unworthily we do in this our little world, to give God scarcely even what is barely necessary;—niggards, so to speak, towards Him our most bountiful Lord;—to render Him grudgingly that which is His own, and for the most part to study, not what is most pleasing to *Him*, but what is most convenient to *ourselves*. Secondly, consider how plenteous He willed to make our redemption, (and therefore only, because it was most profitable for us,) when one drop of His blood had been more than sufficient; yet we in behalf of our own salvation, and in that which pertaineth to His greater glory, are, ah! how tardy and niggardly! Consider thirdly, how many are the Sacraments and other spiritual aids and graces, which He bestoweth; and let us be ashamed to seek that which is displeasing unto Him. For what hath our most bounteous God beautiful and goodly, which He hath not bestowed upon us? Dwell upon the affection of gratitude.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER how all in every quarter seek the highest honours, comforts, advantages for themselves, and with what zeal and earnestness; and tell me, I pray thee, do not we owe more zeal and love to Jesus our Lord? Yet do we often prefer the very least things unto Him, or even, O shameless insolence! though they be His very own, we deny them to Him, troubling ourselves but little at all as to promoting His greater

glory. Run over in mind thy sluggishness in the things of God, and thou wilt perceive that thou, who art a very mean slave, sayest as it were unto the King, I desire to be treated even splendidly by Thee, but do Thou be content with what is cheap and vile; my fellow-servant, yea, even Thine enemy I desire to honour and to be had in honour by, but Thou must look to Thine honour Thyself; and just when I have leisure,

will I speak with Thee, and pay Thee some degree of honour.
Men's favour more sought than God's. For are not the generality of men, O Jesu Who art most present to me, more anxious to court men's favour, more troubled

if that be lost, than Thy favour, O my God? do they not serve them more promptly, honour them more diligently, than Thee our God and Lord? (*Here awaken contrition of heart.*) Secondly, consider God as a

king, who bounteously bestoweth on some men very many gifts, and of the greatest value, and although he hath no real need of any of them, yet asks for some little thing in return,
We give God the cheapest both as to time and measure.

to try the temper of him who has received them: but how base were it, if he in return should in all things give him the cheapest things he had, and such as he would scarce throw to the dogs. Yet so *he* doth, who goeth after his own lusts, which are in truth like rabid dogs, and bestows on them the best of his time, his years, his strength, his pains; but gives, yea rather throws, God the worse share in all. Consider thirdly, how worldly men so serve their mistress the world, that each endeavours with anxious rivalry to excel others in wealth, pleasures and the like; and how base it is, if God on the other hand receives but a lukewarm service at His servant's hands, and but the least things are given Him.

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER firstly, that all things are nothing in God's sight; yet if thou knowest this for true, and most true as it is indeed, what madness it is to labour for any thing but God? Secondly, that Saints and Angels lift up their voice, and apply all their affections in His praises, and yet are ashamed that they give so little back to Majesty so great, to such great goodness: but thou, what dost thou do, what dost thou render to thy God? Imagine thyself in the midst of those blessed spirits, and how wouldst thou blush at thy lukewarmness in seeking God's glory, and that thou shouldst even question whether thou art obliged and bound to do this or that thing, in order to advance the greater glory of God? And ah, alas, what if God were only to give thee as much as He is obliged and bound to give thee. Consider thirdly, how, even though we were His enemies, He hath given us, out of His great love, the most precious gifts,

Himself, and His Son, and the Holy Spirit; and if He hath so loved us, God Himself loved us, loved us more as it were than Himself; how shameful, how unworthy is it, that we should not love Him as much as ourselves? Do I then believe these things, O my Lord, do I believe them? do I hope to see Thee in the land of the living? do I desire to love Thee for ever with my whole heart? and yet shall the world, or shall desire, care, anxiety for some other thing, now claim so great portion in it?

Exercise.

O Jesu, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is it indeed reigning to, serve Thee, Thee to Whom every knee doth justly bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth^a? Lo, we stand before Thee, in this theatre the universe, and from Thy hand we have all received, and do receive, every hour, yea every moment, blessings innumerable. And wherefore receive we them? that we may serve Thee, praise Thee, and work out our own salvation. What shall we do, O my Redeemer? lo! hard by are the world, the flesh, and the devil, Thy and my most cruel and foul enemies, most ready to cause me and my members to serve them unto iniquity, and unto my own eternal and inextricable ruin; but Thou art my Creator and my King, my best Father, and my most merciful God, Who hast preserved me times without number, when I was rushing headlong to the pit, and dost preserve me now; Who dost daily, in token of Thy love, give me to drink of Thy blood. Whom then should I serve? shall I forsake Thee, and yield or devote to enemies a word, or thought, or deed, to my own so great injury, to Thy so great and just grief? And wherefore, I pray Thee, should I do so? in presence of Thyself and Thy company in Heaven to give Thy goods to Thine enemies and mine? and to serve them and not Thee? God forbid, that I should study their pleasure, and before the whole universe should despise Thee? should turn my back upon Thee, in order, idolatrously, to honour those who pursue me with unutterable malice, and to be rewarded by suffering the most exquisite tortures at their hands, and perishing for ever and ever.

See what a man does having an evil purpose of heart.

Are these things the very truth, and can I be so mad, and senseless, and impious, toward Thee, O most pitiful Jesu? What, I would fain know,

^a Phil. ii. 10.

do I carry away for all these toils and sweat, except a puff of honour, which whether I really have I can never know, and which I cannot retain; or else some pleasure, certainly but momentary, and which must vex my heart and conscience afterwards with cruel tortures: but Thou from eternity hast loved me with an infinite love, and in return for word, thought, and deed, promisest me eternal glory; and hast bestowed, and dost bestow on me, unnumbered blessings; and art ready every day to feed me with Angels' food,—to let down the majesty of Thy greatness to this Thy most vile slave, who is but dust: and shall I still make a mock at Thee, and deliver Thy gifts to me, my members namely and abilities, unto the enemy, to Thy contempt and dishonour?

Now therefore, O Lord my God, I return unto Thee with my whole heart; now I, who was born blind, do open mine eyes; now I, who was deaf and dumb, do hear Thy loving voice, speaking by Thy Apostle, Whatsoever ye do, in word and in deed, do all unto the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ¹. I will labour by Thy grace that Thou mayst be praised in Thine inheritance, that my heart may rejoice in Thy salvation, that mine eyes may always be unto Thee, and that the eyes of Thine infinite mercy may be open towards this place, even my soul². Suffer me not, I beseech Thee, O my sweet Redeemer, to deal thus madly any longer, but grant me grace, that as I have offered myself wholly, and do now offer myself unto Thee, as by innumerable titles I am Thine, so as a tree in Thy vineyard, I may render Thee all fruits in their season; lest at any time I be convicted of having robbed Thee,—lest on that day Thou shouldst be a terror to me,—lest in vain I come with the labourers, and in vain expect my hire, which is only Thyself, O good Jesu. Who payeth wages to such as have not wrought for him? Grant me grace therefore to work for Thee, and be Thou my exceeding great reward; I consent to serve for no other hire and recompense but Thee. For whom should I, who am wretched, and helpless, and poor, and the offscouring of all things, serve, whom rather than Thee? Therefore I will make all the tribes of the earth to bless and praise Thee, and that Thou mayst receive glory and honour of all. Amen, Amen.

RULES FOR ATTAINING TO PURITY OF HEART.

IN order to mount up gradually the steps or degrees mentioned above, the first rule is, for each to consider with himself, in every thing, what his affection is set on, and to deny himself that, lest it should cor-

¹ Col. iii. 17.

² 1 Kings viii. 29.

rupt his singleness of purpose. Then to stimulate himself on some of the grounds mentioned, and to think how reasonable it is to labour unto God's honour, for which he hath been created, rather than (for the devil's, the world's, or his own lust's sake) by any idolatry to offend God, as the saints speak. This thought a man ought to drink in thoroughly by meditating upon it, and then to offer up all his doings, and address them unto God; first, in beginning the day; secondly, in divine service; thirdly, at each of the hours; fourthly, when examining himself, considering beforehand what his actions words and thoughts are likely to be, so far as he possibly can, and offering them to the Divine Majesty, and uniting them to the actions of Christ the Lord. For so will they be far more pleasing in the sight of God, being clothed in the pure gold of His charity. Make also the sign of the Cross before the most considerable of the things thou doest; going on gradually even to others of less moment.

To unite our
actions with
those of
Christ.

In the morning, when thou risest, kneel down and say, Behold I was created that I might obey and serve Thee my God, Who art here and every where present, and not to serve the devil, the world, and the flesh. Therefore I offer unto Thee, with all the earnestness I am able, my actions, (*here specify any in particular,*) words, or thoughts; and with things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, to Thee alone, O Lord Jesu, I bow the knee.

In the evening, after examining thyself, reflect that the day and its works are over, and how greatly it would rejoice thee, wert thou about to die, which even the same night may happen, shouldst thou have done them with a single mind; wish that thou hadst done all quite purely unto God's glory, and in this way re-enact them, and offer thy condition and actions to God again till the next examination. Another mode of offering an action may be this; first lift up thy mind to God as present, and say unto Him, I offer this work of mine to Thee unto the increase of Thy glory, and unite it unto the doings of my Lord, and love Thee with my whole heart. This may be sometimes uttered word for word, or it may be thought over in a moment, and the actions, as said before, united with those of Christ our Lord.

Exhortations.

THIS may be used: "*Who is like unto the Lord our God?*" Psalm cxiii. 5: considering Him, not as though He were only the most worthy of all honour, but as the Being to Whom alone all honour and glory is due.

Whom have I in Heaven but Thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee." Psalm lxxiii. 24: or, "*O all ye works of the Lord, bless*

ye the Lord :" Song of the Three Children. As though one should say, "*All things are God's ; I will not claim to myself, I will not abuse to Thy dishonour, that which is Thy gift, O my God.*"

" To the increase of Thy glory I do this, O God, and love Thee with my whole heart."

" Praise, glory, and thanksgiving be unto Thee for ever and ever. Amen."

" Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the glory."

Psalm cxv. 1.

" Unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Tim. i. 17.



IMAGE THE THIRTY-FIRST.

WALK BEFORE GOD, AND BE THOU PERFECT.

Believe thou and firmly apprehend that God (A) is present in every place, and that with His eyes (B) which are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, He beholdeth and searcheth thy reins and thine heart, and watcheth all thy ways. He seeth our perilous straits (C) and our temptations (D), in order that He may assist us. He considereth the festive revellers (E) who here receive their good things; and the penitents (F) who here bewail the evil things which they have committed, in order that He may reward them,—and the wicked (G) in order that, sooner or later, He may punish them. Set Him therefore always before thee, whether thou art engaged in traffic, (H) or art eating and drinking. If thou art playing (I), yet let it be as in His sight. Walk thou with Him (K); and remember above all things that He is present in thine heart (L); manage as with Him all thy affairs; choose thy state of life (M) as according to His will, attending therein also to the inclination of thine own nature, for this also is from God. Remember that from Him is all spiritual authority (N) and all temporal power (O). It is God that worketh all in all, and reacheth from end to end, and strongly and sweetly disposeth all things according to the greatness of His power, His wisdom, and His goodness.

Meditation

UPON GOD'S PRESENCE.

IMAGINE to thyself as it were a light immeasurable, pervading and penetrating this universe as a little point, since indeed it is but as a drop of the morning dew before God^a.

FIRST POINT.

CONSIDER, O my soul, all the parts of the universe, the earth, and whatsoever is in it or upon it, woods, caves, and the like. Secondly, the God alleth water; thirdly, the air; fourthly, fire; fifthly, the heavens, all things. and whatever is in them all; and that there is nothing which God doth not occupy and fill, and intimately pervade with His presence; —the place where thou standest, and thyself, and all things, yea all possible and all imaginary infinity of space. O Incomprehensible God, my Father, how great is Thy house! If I climb up into Heaven, Thou art there; if I go down into hell, Thou art there also^b; neither can the heaven of heavens contain Thee^c. Oh! how blind are we sons of men, who neither fear Thee as Lord, when Thou standest near and art present, neither love Thee as sons love a most pitiful Father; neither as soldiers and wrestlers are animated by Thy presence Who art our King.

SECOND POINT.

CONSIDER with firm faith, that God is every where by His essence, His power, and His presence. By essence, for truly the Holy Trinity—the Father begetting the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from both, is every where present here, so that if the brightness of glory were

^a Wisdom xi. 22.

^b Psalm cxxxix. 8.

^c 1 Kings viii. 27.

vouchsafed, thou mightest be happy even here. See therefore How God is that thou never reckon thyself to be alone, but with great every where. reverence in every place stand as near unto thy God. Secondly, observe that He is every where by His presence, because He knoweth all things, knoweth thy temptations, searcheth thy reins and thy thoughts: Him therefore only desire to please—commit all things unto Him, Who alone reacheth from end unto end, for our foresight and providence is altogether most uncertain; and exercise thyself in resignation. Thirdly, observe that God is every where by His power, that this, and His goodness and wisdom shine out in the creatures in their weight, number, measure, manner, appearance and order, substance, virtue and operation, beginning, decay, and end. For all these things of a truth doth God move and sustain; giving to some existence, to some life, to some vegetation, to some understanding, so that if He did but withdraw His God uphold- hand, all things would be reduced to nothing. Consider how He eth all things. worketh both that which is natural, and that which is above nature, the things of the artificial and of the moral world, so that just as the presence of the soul in the body is known by its operations, so by these things is His presence in all things to be recognised. Lastly, with eyes ever bent upon thee, He beholdeth thee wheresoever thou art, and seeth both the evil and the good, and each one among them as if he were the only one. And who then would dare to offend Thee, O my God, before Whom ten thousand times ten thousand stand^d? Who but must love Thee? since Thou art every where present, and standest by me, and fillest all things with blessing, in order that I may love Thee, O Infinite Goodness? Who then shall not fear Thee, and Thy judgments, which are like the great deep^e? who but will work for Thee, Who workest all things in all for us? Lastly, who would not endure, when afflicted and tempted, as seeing Him Who is invisible^f, since all our works are as the sun in Thy sight?

THIRD POINT.

CONSIDER, first, O man, that God and the Holy Trinity are verily within thee, piercing through all things, and joined to thee with a more intimate union than thy very soul is. Secondly, not only are within thee, but communicating unto thee of His own perfections, as also to the rest of His creatures, giving all being, and reason, and the like, and especially faith, and the grace whereby thou art His son; and consider thyself as moving, walking, and doing all things in Him, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being^g; and thy several parts and abilities,

^d Dan. vii. 10.^f Heb. xi. 27.^e Psalm xxxvi. 6.^g Acts xvii. 28.

and all thy members, and senses, from Him receive power to be, and to work ; yea, thou art encompassed by Him, as a babe in the womb of its mother, and hast Him for thy wall, thy bed, thy nourishment ; thou existest in Him as a bird doth in the air, or a fish doth in the water, or as if in the midst of a great light, or of a fire always burning, yet without consuming thee ;—thee, who wouldst presently return to nothing if He were to withdraw Himself, as when a torch is taken away, the light presently faileth. Thirdly, consider how all things are in thy soul, God and the whole world, which entereth into it through the portals of the

The soul the habitation of God. senses ; see next how thy mind possesseth consciousness, loveth, remembereth, and is God's image and habitation, and

make unto thyself a chamber in thy heart, and there adore, and ask counsel of the Lord. Pray often in this secret place ; rejoice as over thy present Treasure, Defender, Light, yea, thy every good ; loathe whatsoever is displeasing to eyes far brighter than the sun, and sigh often unto God, and say, Put me only beside Thee, O Lord, and let the hand of any other fight against me^h : suffer not my heart to be divided, and though I perish, yet let me abide by Thy grace in Thy love ; in Thee only do I desire to abide for ever.

FOURTH POINT.

CONSIDER the different modes by which God is in some places in an especial manner. First, in Heaven, where He displayeth His glory :—do thou therefore aspire unto it. Secondly, He is in a peculiar manner upon earth, in places where He giveth some sign of His presence ; as when He appeared unto Jacob, who therefore affirmed, Surely the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it notⁱ. In this way, too, is He in churches and oratories ; and ponder it in mind how that in such places various inspirations are vouchsafed by God, and that many different benefits have been in them conferred upon thee, and give thanks with all thy heart. Thirdly, He is in an especial manner in the righteous, for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him^k ; and desire that He may likewise ever abide in thee. Fourthly, He is and abideth for thee in the blessed Eucharist ; consider therefore how thou canst shew thy gratitude for so great a benefit by frequent attendance at the Holy Communion, and that with great reverence and love. Fifthly, contemplate Jesus, according to His human nature, sitting in Heaven and governing all our concerns. Thou seest how God is present unto thee in manifold ways, how near and yet how far from thee, if at any time thou committest grievous sin, and offendest, and forgettest Him. O Lord, what is

^h Job xvii. 3. Vulgate.

ⁱ Gen. xxviii. 16.

^k 1 John iv. 16.

man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him¹?

FIFTH POINT.

CONSIDER, first, how shameful it is that God ceaseth not in every place to uphold all things for thee, in order that thou shouldst remember Him, that by all things He allureth thee to love Him, and conferreth on thee benefits innumerable, (for those which are for man's sake conferred upon any creature, may justly be said to be bestowed upon himself,) and again, that He preserveth thee from innumerable evils, (for there are none which may not befall thee,) and yet that thou rememberest Him not. It is Gregory Nazianzen who saith, That we ought not to draw in our breath as often as we ought to remember God. For God is continually and without ceasing doing us good. Consider, secondly, that this exercise is so useful that it hath been even thought by some to be of all things that which should be most carefully practised, and that this is the one cause that few attain to perfection, that they use various other exercises and devotions, without properly practising this. It may be added, that the sayings of the holy Fathers ought to move us to the frequent use of this exercise, for that all with one consent, as taught by one Master, to wit, the Holy Spirit, exhort us unto it. Consider, thirdly, how much it hath been valued by holy men even of later times, how much they dwelt on the inculcation of this almost alone, and have themselves practised it together with all Saints, as David and others. Fourthly, weigh some passages of Holy Writ, in which this exercise is commanded. Seek the Lord, and His strength^m, seek His face evermore; and again, In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy pathsⁿ. And again, take notice how often our only Master, Christ, exhorteth us unto prayer, even so as to teach that men ought always to pray^o. Fifthly, take notice how this exercise maketh us like unto Angels, and to the blessed, who always behold the face of the Father^p. And truly this contemplation of Him here is the beginning of bliss. Moreover, weigh the profit and spiritual growth springing from it, first, as bringing purity of heart, and hindering from sin, as it has been known in some remarkable instances; for truly who would be bold enough to sin in the presence of his Judge? Secondly, it enableth us to overcome temptations, and addeth courage unto us, as is shewn in the case of the chaste Susanna. Without a sense of God's presence, indeed, man

The advantage of realising God's presence, as an exercise.

Holy Scripture commandeth this exercise.

¹ Psalm viii. 4.

ⁿ Prov. iii. 6.

^m Psalm cv. 4. And be strengthened. Vulgate.

^o Luke xviii. 4.

^p Matt. xviii. 10.

becometh, either through wantonness like a beast, or through anger like a devil. Thirdly, stedfastness of heart in prayer is acquired by this exercise, and in affliction constancy, seeing that all things are then received as coming from God's hand. Fourthly, perfectness in all graces is also acquired, for by this exercise the heart is united unto God, and so enlightened as to shine also outwardly itself, as planets shine from receiving the sun's light upon them. Fifthly, it especially increaseth love towards God, and spiritual consolation, because as the Scripture saith of Josiah, the remembrance of our God and Lord will be sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine^q. Lastly, see

Consider
the effect
in worldly
things of a
king's pre-
sence.

what feelings in human things the presence of a king, father, judge, friend, bridegroom would raise, or of some fountain of all goodness in the sight of one thirsty; of bread, able to content every man's delight^r, in the sight of one hungry. Such doth realizing God's presence afford unto men. If I believe all this to be true, and thou also believest it, O reader, what else should be thy study, delight, solace? and what else should be mine?

Exercise.

The heavens declare Thy glory unto me, O Infinite God, and every creature, which the eyes of my mind survey, crieth out in mine ears, Great is the Lord and great is His power; but my reason also in these Thy footsteps findeth Thee out: for every where, and even in my heart, doth Thy wisdom, power, and goodness, shine forth. And do we indeed live and move and have our being in Thee, as a sponge in the sea, a bird in the air? How then do I not recognise Thee as present, how am I able to forget Thee? Dost Thou behold me continually, and spy out all my ways with Thine eyes, which are far brighter than the sun? What is it then which can be hid from Thee? for Thou art truly the Lord, God alone invisible, inconceivable, uncircumscribed, unlimited by place, immeasurable, incomprehensible, every where present, and every where whole; after an ineffable sort embracing all things, pervading all things, knowing all things, forming all things, having all power, governing all things, whole in Heaven, whole in earth, whole also every where. Thou beholdest my goings and my paths, and by day and by night watchest to guard me, diligently marking all my ways, as my unceasing watcher, as though unmindful of all creation, of

^q Ecclus. xlix. 1.

^r Wisdom xvi. 20.

Heaven and earth, Thou wert considering me only by myself, and hadst no thought of others. For neither doth the unchangeable light of Thy vision wax brighter, if Thou shouldst regard one alone, God watcheth over each as over all. neither is it less clear when innumerable and different objects are presented unto it*. Therefore in such wise Thou standest and guardest me, as if Thou hadst forgotten' all other, and didst desire to bend Thy thoughts on me alone; for always Thou shewest Thyself present, always Thou offerest Thyself as ready, if Thou but findest me so. Wheresoever I go, Thou, Lord, wilt not leave me, except I should first leave Thee.

I confess indeed, that whatever I do, and in whatsoever sort or kind, I do it in Thy sight; and that which I do, whatsoever it is, Thou seest better than I who do it; for whatsoever I work continually, Thou art as continually present and standing by, the perpetual surveyer of my thoughts and purposes, my pleasures and employments. And when I diligently consider this, O Lord my God, strong and terrible, I am confounded A necessity laid upon us to live aright, being in God's presence. alike with fear and great shame, for great necessity is laid upon us to live justly and righteously, when we do all things before the eyes of a Judge that beholdeth all. And so indeed there is, O my Saviour, but Thy love ought to draw me unto Thee far more, ought far more to rescue me from a state of sluggishness, in that Thou art true Light enlightening all things, Infinite Power which workest all things for my sake. For through Thee the sun shineth for me, the stars also, and the constellations of Thy palace, my proper country: through Every creature ministereth to man. Thee the air cooleth and the fire warmeth me, and things innumerable work by Thee: the fowls of the air delight me with their various songs, and invite me to praise Thee; through Thee the earth yieldeth unto me the herb, and every tree, and from her bowels bringeth forth things innumerable. Who hath bestowed such ornament and beauty upon the universe, but Thou, Who art Supreme Beauty and Perfection, and Who hast given as it were this drop out of Thine Ocean, this little beam out of Thyself the Sun, that we who see these things to be from Thee, may sigh after and come unto Thee, the Fountain of all.

O how long have I been of knowing Thee, and loving Thee, Beauty so old, yet so new†. Woe to that time when I loved Thee not. Woe unto me, woe once and again, if there ever was a time when I loved Thee not. O that I might rather cease to be, than be without Thee at any time. Justly might my tears be my meat day and night, if it could again at any time be said unto me, Where is now Thy God? The Magdalene wept, because they had taken away the Lord, and she knew not where they had laid Him: and what should I do, O Bridegroom of my soul, if Thou hadst separated Thyself from me, in Thine anger at my sins; and I knew where Thou

* August. Soliloq. cap. 14.

† August. Confess.

wert, and a great gulph was betwixt me and Thee? May Thy loving-kindness avert so great a calamity, and mayst Thou never suffer me to be severed from Thee. Behold I am in a barren and dry land, where no water is: let Thy kindness and love towards men appear unto me, teaching me that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts^u, I may hold fast by Thee, and with a free heart may fly unto Thee, that I may always behold Thy goodness and Thy glory.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, even so mine eyes wait upon Thee, O Lord my God, until Thou have mercy upon me. Have mercy, therefore, upon me, and grant me to behold Thee ever present, and to look up unto Thee, and by Thy grace to love Thee. Let me not hear those who are set over me, as it were men speaking unto me, but do Thou speak unto me in them and through them, Who art wont to teach me what is for my profit, and to command me what is best: for they are Thy mouth, Thy oracle, and Thy tabernacle; and he that heareth them heareth Thee^x. My neighbours also, since I know them to be Thy members, I will not hurt by deed, I will not touch in word, or thought; for he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of Thine eye^y; but what I cannot do to Thee, Who hast need of nothing, and bestowest all things, that will I do to Thee in them, O my most loving God, and will repay Thee the things Thou hast given unto me; in them will I embrace Thee, in them will I love, and feed, and comfort Thee; and if any good cometh unto myself from any creature, mine eyes shall look unto Thee: for every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from Thee, the Father of lights^z. It is not the pen that writeth, the pencil that painteth, the trumpet that soundeth, the sword that protecteth, but it is Thou rather which doest these things, for that Thou art the artificer of all good things, and all their operations are Thine. And so as there is no moment in which man doth not use and enjoy Thy goodness and mercy, so ought there to be no moment but what he should have Thee present in his remembrance^a.

I will set Thee, therefore, O Lord, always before me, and will behold Thee compassing me about on every side, and piercing even to my most inward parts; and I will love Thee, Who art every where present, and hast within me Thy throne, above me the great throne of Thy kingdom. Thou compassest me round, as it were water, or air, or fire, or as an ocean of all good things; and whither, or how shall I flee from Thy presence? or rather, why shall I not walk with fear and trembling in Thy sight, O most just Judge, and most merciful Father? Can a man forget his Maker, and his so great Benefactor? Behold all things which are, are for my sake,

^u Tit. iii. 4; ii. 12.

^x Luke x. 16.

^y Zach. ii. 8.

^z James i. 17.

^a Hugo de S. Victor, Instit. lib. iii. de animâ.

not for themselves, nor for Thee ; but they cry out unto me to love Thee, and remember Thee, Who ceasest not to do good to, and remember me ; and if he is unmindful of Thee, what, I would ask, is man that Thou art mindful of him ? And if these things are too little, do not all things again bring up anew the memory of Thy Passion, and of Thy pains, and vehemently stimulate us to remembrance of Thee, because Thou hast vouchsafed to come to us in the Holy Eucharist ?

O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, and come down unto me, and that the mountains, which separate me from Thee, might flow down at Thy presence ; as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy Name known to Thine adversaries^b. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what Thou hast prepared here for them that wait for Thee and love Thee. O Thou lover of men, how, when I find and believe Thee present in so many ways, do I notwithstanding neither see, nor love, nor reverence Thee, as I ought ? What shall I do, my God, and my refuge, my hope, my glory, and my joy ? Thou alone art able to comfort, Thou alone to strengthen me. Come, shew me Thy face, and make Thy abode with me : that I may abide in Thee, and in Thy love for ever ; that I may walk before Thee all the days of my life, and may at last behold Thy countenance, O desire of mine eyes, for ever and ever. Amen.

RULES FOR REALIZING GOD'S PRESENCE.

FIRST, with mind undisturbed, and in an undisturbed spot, contemplate God as in the things which thou seest before thee, by essence, presence, and power. Firstly, by essence ; because, as was said before, He filleth Heaven and earth with His nature, and pervadeth every small thing, more intimately than the soul doth the body of a man. Secondly, by presence ; because He knoweth all things clearly and distinctly, and from eternity, and searcheth our reins and our hearts. Thirdly, by power ; because He giveth being unto all things, and preserveth them, and worketh in them. Refer all things unto God. The same thing do, when any affliction cometh on thee, or some one hath conferred a kindness on thee, so as to refer all things to their Author.

Secondly, observe, how in Him we live, and move, and have our being, in Him both breathe and walk, being encompassed by Him In God we live. on every side.

Thirdly, after the Holy Communion more especially make an exercise of

^b Isaiah lxiv. 1, 2, 4.

this presence of God ; not only by believing it, and realizing it, by exercising the reason upon it, but by adding faith, hope, and charity, thereunto.

God con- sidereth us from Heaven.

Fourthly, contemplate Him, as out of Heaven considering all thy ways and thy doings.

Fifthly, account thyself as the temple of God, and in thy heart, as it were a shrine, adore God : and there enquire of Him as Moses enquired at the tabernacle. For what sense were it, to have the Eternal Wisdom and Truth dwelling with one, and not to search out His purpose and will, when He is King of kings and Lord of lords?

Our heart God's temple.

Sixthly, consider diligently the creatures, to which the Divine Wisdom hath vouchsafed to compare Himself, such as the Lion, the Lamb, a Corner-stone, and the like. As St. Francis is said to have felt the tenderest emotion at the sight of a lamb. Of another Saint it is related, that if he saw a ladder, or heard an outcry or tumult made, or heard the strokes of a hammer, or beheld drops of rain falling to the ground, he referred all to the Passion of our Lord, for they recalled a thankful remembrance of the drops of bloody sweat, and the instruments of the Passion.

Created things give tokens of God and of Christ.

Seventhly, all God's creatures may be taken notice of as benefits unto us from God, and may be heard to speak unto us these words, *Receive, render, beware* : for if something is given unto mortals through them from God's hand, they demand that thanks be rendered unto God in return, and that men beware of abusing them, and that our love be transferred to Himself.

What all God's creatures say to us.

Eighthly, in His creatures possessing reason to behold God Himself, availeth very much to charity and obedience, in other words to all sorts of perfection ; Honour therefore God in thy superiors both ecclesiastical and temporal, receive their commands as the Voice of God, for he that heareth you, saith the Lord Jesus, heareth Me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me^c ; and St. Paul saith, Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, for there is no power but of God^d. St. Bernard^e observes, Whether God Himself, or a man, who is God's deputy, hath delivered a command, surely our business is to obey it with equal care, to defer to it with equal respect, where at least man hath not commanded things contrary to God. In like manner God is to be contemplated in our neighbour, and we are to think we do to God, what we do to him ; For inasmuch, saith the Lord, as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me ; as again, whatsoever is done by others, let us judge it to be done unto us by God ; let us not attribute it to this man or that man, but with Job, let our words be only these, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away^f. And truly this exercise is very full of delight, and conduoeth not a little unto

A useful exercise of charity.

charity, when we look on and embrace our neighbours as the members of Christ. Whence St. Leo^g saith : When I see this most august assemblage of my venerable fellow presbyters, I feel as if an

^c Luke x. 16.

^e Bernard, lib. de præcepto et dispens. cap. xii.

^g St. Leo. Sermon. I. in Annunt.

^d Rom. xiii. 2.

^f Job i. 21.

assembly of Angels was present with us in so many holy men; nor do I doubt, that we are this day visited with a more abundant gift of the Divine presence, when so many goodly tabernacles of God, so many of the most excellent members of Christ's Body, are together present, and shine with one commingled light. For every one of our neighbours is a tabernacle and member of Christ.

Ninthly, according to the advice of holy men to keep God always and every where in remembrance, that, sitting loose to all created things, thou apply the whole endeavour of thy mind, and thy whole fervour of desire unto thy Creator, that as if forgetful of all lower things, whatever thou doest, wheresoever thou art, and on whatsoever business engaged, by day and by night, at every hour and moment, thou mayst have God always in remembrance, believing and imagining thyself to be most truly in His presence, and Him to be looking upon thee which way soever thou turnest. But think all this with great reverence, and with both fear and love, and with much judgment; now prostrating thyself before the feet of His boundless Majesty, and asking pardon for thy sins with great bitterness of heart; now, as at the most holy Passion of the Son of God, appearing as if before His Cross with weeping and mourning, as wounded together with Him with the sword of sympathetic suffering and sorrow; now going over in thy mind the course of His whole life, setting as it were the straightness of that line over against thy crookedness; now going over the unspeakable and immeasurable mercies of God, and giving thyself unto acts of thanksgiving; now pricked with the ardent stings of the love of Him, beholding Him in all created things; now marking His power, now His wisdom, now His goodness and mercy, and praising Him most devoutly in all His works; now being drawn by longings for our heavenly country unto Himself, and panting after it with groanful sighings; now beholding His bonds of inestimable love towards us; again considering thyself now rushing headlong, now fleeing, now falling; and then considering God holding thee, raising thee up, keeping thee back, and drawing thee, and in the midst of all dangers preserving thee, ungrateful that thou art; and when the unspeakable bowels of the Divine mercy towards thee are then laid open, comparing thyself with that surpassing fervency of love in Him, and melting into penitential tears; now again diligently observing the most hidden, most profound, the very great and truly awful judgments of His justice; and faithfully, constantly venerating Him 'in all things, with the deepest love, yet with great fear and trembling, discreetly, suppliantly, and humbly; but, above all, bearing about in heart and mind a continual and lively remembrance of His most sacred Passion, endeavour to the utmost of thy power to be conformed unto it.

Various methods of realising God's presence.

Exhortations.

"Hide not Thy face from me, nor cast Thy servant away in displeasure."
Psalm xxvii. 10.

"When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?" Psalm xlii. 2.

"Turn Thee unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am poor and in misery." Psalm xxv. 15.

"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." Psalm xxxiv. 15.

"As the eyes of a maiden look unto the hand of her mistress; even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us." Psalm cxxiii. 2.

"If I climb up into Heaven, Thou art there; if I go down into hell, Thou art there also." Psalm cxxxix. 7.

"Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit: or whither shall I go then from Thy presence?" Psalm cxxxix. 6.

"Shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole." Ps. lxxx. 19.

"Why standest Thou so far off, O Lord; and hidest Thy face in the needful time of trouble?" Psalm x. 1.

"Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." Gen. xxviii. 16.

NOTE.

The last Image, No. XXXII, was made use of on a former occasion, in "The Baptistry," by entirely altering the whole character and subject of it; but in these extracts translated from the Latin work it has been found requisite entirely to omit it. The writer having always expressed a strong sense of the corruptions of the Church of Rome has never found any reason for altering his opinions on that subject.

I. W.









